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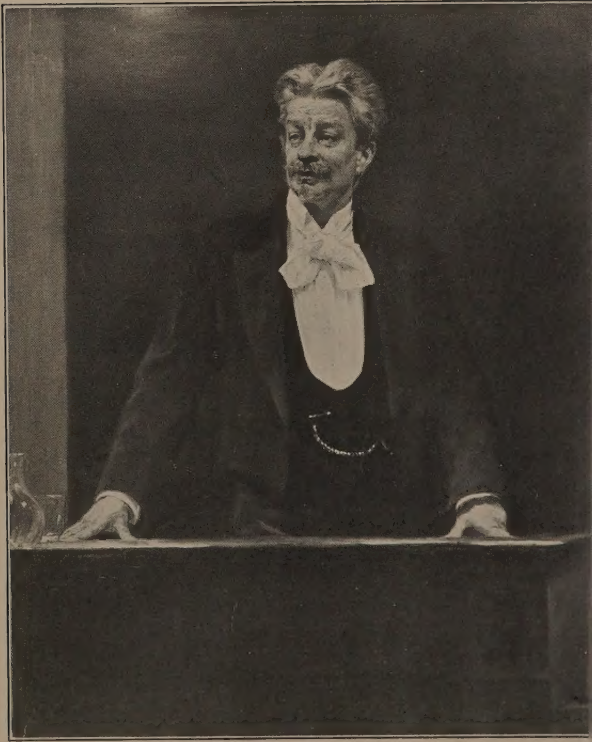

Georg Brandes

From a Painting by P. S. Kröyer

SCANDINAVIAN LITERATURE

FROM BRANDES TO OUR DAY

BY

H. G. TOPSÖE-JENSEN

Translated from the Danish by
ISAAC ANDERSON

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PREFACE

The present outline of the history of Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish literature from 1870 to our day was originally written for a Dutch popular scholarly series; it appears now with a few corrections and additions. The Introductory Survey has been written for the American edition.

Naturally enough, in a brief presentation which aims to embrace half a century of the rich literature of three countries, one must be content with indicating the main trends and with characterizing the chief writers, rather than to attempt to give a complete picture of the literary development. Furthermore, the chief emphasis must be placed upon the time previous to the World War. The impress of the literature of the last decade is as yet far from clear enough to make it possible to set forth objective viewpoints concerning this period.

And finally, it is necessary, for practical reasons, to restrict oneself to Scandinavia in the narrowest sense of the term: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. It is necessary to ignore the literature of Finland and Iceland, although both these countries have made important contributions, and although such Danish-writing Icelanders as Jóhann Sigurjónsson, the dramatist, and Gunnar Gunnarson, the novelist, and such Swedish Finns as Karl af Tavastjerna, Hj. Procopé, M. Lybeck, Bertel Gripenberg, and Runar Schildt may with justice be reckoned as belonging respectively to Danish and Swedish literature.

H. G. T.-J.

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SCANDINAVIAN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTORY SURVEY

DURING the last half of the nineteenth century Scandinavian literature became an important factor in the literature of the world. But even before that period a few of its great works and a few of its writers attracted attention outside the boundaries of their countries. In briefly mentioning these names we shall dwell at greater length on the period from 1800 to 1870, the era of Romanticism, which forms the background for the emergence of Naturalism in the 1870's, when modern Scandinavian literature had its birth.

Northern antiquity lives again for us in the Norwegian-Icelandic *Eddas,* whose songs of gods and heroes have been an inexhaustible source of inspiration not only for Scandinavian, but also for English and German poetry. From the Middle Ages come the Icelandic family sagas, perhaps the most completely artistic prose of the time. Two great historians, SAXO (about 1200) and SNORRI STURLUSON, who died in 1241, narrate the chronicles of Denmark and Norway. A form of poetry which flourishes in all three countries, but most richly in

Denmark, is the popular ballad, the short narrative poem which sometimes pictures great historic events, sometimes the heroes of the saga period or the fabulous beings of the ancient myths, but which also portrays scenes of contemporary life in castle and in hut. In the antiquity of its traditions and in the number of poems which have been preserved Denmark takes a leading place in popular ballad literature. Sweden can boast of one of the most remarkable and most authoritative religious writers of the Middle Ages, SAINT BIRGITTA, who died in 1373.

During the first centuries after the Reformation, science forced creative writing into the background; one need only mention such names as those of the Danes, Tycho Brahe, Ole Römer and Steno, and the Swedes, O. Rudbeck, Linné and Swedenborg. But the eighteenth century marks a new flowering of literature. The greatest literary personage of the Danish-Norwegian dual monarchy is LUDVIG HOLBERG (1684–1754). He was born in Bergen, but he spent his active years in Copenhagen; he was equally important as a writer of comedies, a historian, and a popular philosopher, the Molière and at the same time the Voltaire of the North. The German influence from Klopstock bears its finest fruits in the works of the Dane, JOHANNES EWALD (1743–1781), who has the sublime gift of true pathos. The French spirit is exemplified in the Norwegian satirist, J. H. WESSEL (1742–1785). The unrest of the transition period, which with the French Revolution forms a bridge from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, is a ferment in the brilliant, restless mind of JENS BAGGESEN (1764–

1826). In Sweden the rococo period's intimate mingling of French and Swedish culture culminates during the reign of Gustav III; KELLGREN (1751–1795) and LEOPOLD (1756–1829) were the foremost representatives of Classicism; while Rousseau's disciple, THOMAS THORILD, and BENGT LIDNER, a "Sturm und Drang" type, were exponents of pre-Romanticism. At the transition to the new century stand F. M. FRANZÉN (1772–1847) and the great hymn writer, J. O. WALLIN (1779–1839). Quite outside the official literature, and yet the most vivid figure of the Gustavian period, is CARL MICHAEL BELLMAN (1740–1795). His songs—*Fredman's Epistles and Fredman's Songs*—paint wonderfully lifelike pictures of the gay Bohemian scenes of Stockholm. In these songs we find the mythological Graces of the rococo period and a heavy and often tragic realism, forming together a higher unity in humor in which there are both smiles and tears.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century Romanticism came to the North. Its theory was proclaimed in Denmark by the young Norwegian naturalist, HENRIK STEFFENS (1773–1845), who was a disciple of Schelling. It was in Denmark, too, that Romanticism came decisively to the fore in the work of ADAM OEHLENSCHLÄGER (1779–1850), a young adherent of Steffens. In the descriptive poem, *The Golden Horns* (1802), Oehlenschläger glorified antiquity and proclaimed Romanticism's theory of intuitive poetic genius which is able at a glance to form a complete concept of the spirit of an age, where the scientists, with their rationalism, merely grope in the dark. His dramatic poem, *Mid-*

summer Night's Play, made merry with the utilitarian poetry of the age of enlightenment and contained positive preachment regarding the new outlook on nature and on history. His chief romantic work is the fairy tale drama, *Aladdin,* in which Fortune's chosen favorite, the tailor's son of *Arabian Nights,* is victorious over the cold and cynical representative of common sense. After 1806 Oehlenschläger drew away from the German Romanticists and became in his writing an adherent of the humanism of the Goethe-Schiller school. At the same time he began to write poetry that was national rather than universal, and he produced an outstanding example of this in his *Northern Poems* (1807), in which his mighty imagination recreates the gods and heroes of antiquity. *Haakon Jarl,* the last piece in this collection, became the foundation of a national school of tragedy. Oehlenschläger's later chief works, the romance cycles *Helge* (1814) and *Gods of the North* (1819), were based on themes from ancient times in the North, and they set the standard for the conception of Northern antiquity up to the time of the appearance of Ibsen and Björnson.

Oehlenschläger's writings on Northern themes were an inspiration to N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG (1783–1872), who was a clergyman, a popular educator and a poet. His remarkable life work extends far beyond the confines of literature, although he is particularly famous for his prolific writing of hymns. Grundtvig is one of the greatest figures in the spiritual life of Denmark. His battle for an outlook on life which should be both Christian and distinctly Northern was carried on with tongue and pen. An

important trend within the Danish State Church bears his name and carries on his ideas; and he is known beyond the boundaries of his country as the creator of the Danish Folk High Schools.

Grundtvig's close friend, B. S. INGEMANN (1789–1862), wrote novels based on the history of Denmark, taking as his models the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott. His religious *Morning and Evening Songs for Children* are among the purest and most beautiful lyrics in Danish literature. A great poet of Goethe's school is J. C. HAUCH (1790–1872), who also wrote tragedies and novels.

Literary criticism in Denmark was created by J. L. HEIBERG (1791–1860). His writing is notable for understanding, wit, and taste, whereas Oehlenschläger and his school placed the chief emphasis on feeling and imagination. From Heiberg's circle came the sternly ethical FR. PALUDAN-MÜLLER (1809–1876). His versified novel *Adam Homo,* the form of which shows the influence of Byron, is a bitterly ironical arraignment of his contemporaries and their romantic Aladdin ideals. The ascetic teachings of his reflective poetry, as in *Kalanus* and *Benedict of Nurcia,* form a poetic parallel to the fight for true Christianity carried on by the solitary philosopher, SÖREN KIERKEGAARD (1813–1855). The ideas of both Paludan-Müller and Kierkegaard reappear later in Ibsen's *Brand* and *Peer Gynt.*

Prose writing had a revival in the works of POUL MARTIN MÖLLER (1794–1838) and STEEN STEENSEN BLICHER (1782–1848). The latter was a master of the short story and excelled in pictures of Jutland. But prose reached its greatest heights in

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN (1805–1875), the Danish writer whose name is most widely known throughout the world.

Andersen was a poor shoemaker's son from Odense on the island of Fyn. His remarkable life is pictured in his autobiography (1885). It bears witness both to his childlike faith in God's guidance of his destiny and to his unconquerable energy, which carried him through many struggles to his goal—world-wide fame. He is great as a novelist and as a travel writer, but he found his own special field in the fairy tale, where he has no equal.

His was the natural gift of which Romanticism dreamed, but he was also a patient worker who labored tirelessly to perfect his art. And more than any of his contemporaries he looked forward. He was a man of the new age. The Romanticists glorified the past at the expense of the present. Andersen believed in man and in progress; he glimpsed new domains for poetry in the mighty developments of the natural sciences and of technical devices. He sang of the railway and the telegraph, and he dreamed of airships which were to carry the men of the future on voyages between America and the Old World.

In Sweden the battle between the old and the new age broke out a few years later than in Denmark, and it ended in complete victory for the Romanticists. The men of the new poetry were divided into two camps. Nearest to the German Romanticism stood the "Phosphorists," named after the leading magazine of the movement. Their greatest name was P. D. A. ATTERBOM (1790–1855). His great-

est work, and likewise the greatest work of the Swedish Romanticist movement, is the fairy tale play, *The Isle of Bliss* (1824–1827). The verse and the style have the glowing warmth of the South, corresponding to the Italian and Spanish models which have influenced the author. Back of the action of the fairy tale lies a profound discussion of ideas, in which pure worship of beauty gives way to ethical considerations. A still bolder Romanticist was Erik Johan Stagnelius (1793–1823), the mystic among the Swedish writers, whose soul tortures are reflected in his predilection for the night side of existence. His most characteristic work is the collection of poems entitled *Lilies of Sharon*, profoundly speculative poems born of the influence of Schelling and the study of Gnosticism.

The other wing of the Romanticists gathered in the Gothic Association. Influenced by Oehlenschläger, its members wished to revive the love of the old North and to create a national Romantic movement. Per Henrik Ling (1776–1839) found inspiration in the Northern mythology for his long epic, *The Asas* (1883). The foremost spokesman of this movement was Erik Gustaf Geijer (1783–1847), historian, politician and poet. He published the Swedish folk ballads, and produced a fundamental, pragmatic presentation of the history of Sweden. His few but exquisite poems depict such Northern types as the Vikings and the yeomen farmers.

Another member of the Gothic Association was Esaias Tegnér (1782–1846), the greatest poet of this period. His chief work, *Frithiof's Saga*, is the

first attempt in Swedish literature to produce distinctly Northern poetry. At the same time, its conciseness, its knightly manner, and its brilliant clarity make it the most typical Swedish work of poetry that exists. Its fame quickly spread to the rest of Europe. As regards its form—a romance cycle—and manner of treatment Tegnér learned much from his model, Oehlenschläger's *Helge*. But he was at the same time an inheritor of the Classicism of Goethe and Schiller. His reflective poetry and his brilliant versified academic festival speeches are far removed from Romanticism. He was equally important as a poet and as a personage. Insanity darkened the last years of his life and has cast a tragic gloom over the memory of his shining figure.

A remarkable transition type is C. J. L. Almquist (1793–1866). His life was adventurous, and his poetry is no less unusual. His chief works were issued under the general title *The Brier Rose Book*. In it a mystically fantastic Romanticism struggles with a clear, sharp Realism, which, by its keen formulation of social or ethical questions, anticipates the problem writing of the future.

Next to Tegnér, Swedish literature's greatest name in the period before the advent of Naturalism is J. L. Runeberg (1804–1877). He came from the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, and much of his best poetry is dedicated to the scenery and history of Finland. His best work is *Ensign Stål's Songs,* a cycle of poems dealing with the war of 1808–09, when Sweden lost Finland. It has become a truly national work of first magnitude.

The first half of the nineteenth century was a

veritable Golden Age for both Danish and Swedish literature. Norway was less fortunate. By the Treaty of Peace at Kiel in 1814 the 400-year political connection between Norway and Denmark had been dissolved. During the same year Norway had obtained constitutional liberty, being the first of the three Northern countries to attain it. This gave rise to an abundant political life, but so far as literature was concerned Norway was for twenty years at an intellectual standstill, until 1830 when the mighty figure of HENRIK WERGELAND (1808–1845) appeared in the foreground. Wergeland was not only a poet, but also a popular educator and a politician. His art was always at the service of an idea or a cause. He became the chieftain of Young Norway, which was opposed to the then still dominant Danish culture. He became the champion of liberalism, inspired by the great ideas of the July Revolution. In 1830 the chief work of his youth appeared, *The Creation, Man and Messiah,* an enormously comprehensive poetic work, brilliant in thought, but extremely uneven in execution, whose great scenes unfold an epic of the entire human race, with the conflict between the flesh and the spirit as its leading theme. In this work Wergeland proclaims his faith in man's constant development toward a higher spiritual level. During the years which followed, his voluminous writings were chiefly in the service of politics or of popular enlightenment, but he found occasion, nevertheless, to write beautiful poems such as *Jan van Huysum's Flower Piece*. Some of his most touching poems were written during his last illness.

Wergeland's opponent, J. S. WELHAVEN (1807–

1873) reminds one of Heiberg in Denmark. He had struck deep roots in the old Danish-Norwegian culture, which he defended against the attacks of Wergeland. Despite the beauty of his poetry he remains merely the clever man of talent and taste, while his opponent is a genius who bursts all bounds.

A national work of extraordinary importance is P. C. ASBJÖRNSEN and JÖRGEN MOE's edition of the Norwegian fairy tales. It occupies the same exalted position in the literature of Norway that Grimm's *Kinder und Hausmärchen* does in that of Germany. And about 1850 two men appear who are to give Norwegian literature European rank. These men are Henrik Ibsen and Björnstjerne Björnson.

THE MODERN AWAKENING

THE MODERN AWAKENING

I: DENMARK

ON the third of November, 1871, Georg Brandes gave his first lecture at the University of Copenhagen. With this date a new period begins in the intellectual life not only of Denmark, but of the entire North.

In reality the appearance of Brandes merely released a latent tension; it was obvious that something must happen. The literature of Denmark was at this time in a manifest state of stagnation. It is true that several of the great poets of Romanticism were still living: Carsten Hauch, Chr. Winther, Fr. Paludan-Müller, Henrik Hertz, and H. C. Andersen; but their work lay for the most part behind them, and the succeeding generation had not been able to take up its inheritance. It was the time of post-Romanticism, the time of the epigoni. The impulses in the 1860's had come from without, from the young Norwegian literature of Ibsen and Björnson. In Denmark philosophical discussion had, as it were, taken precedence over literary production. The time was preoccupied with the great battle of ideas as to the relation between Faith and Knowledge which was even then a threat and a warning of the coming spiritual revolution. The soil had been

prepared by grief over the unfortunate war with Germany in 1864, and by that sharpening of the internal political situation which followed the conservative Constitutional revision of 1866, and which brought with it wearing internal strife lasting from 1870 to 1901. The fullness of time came now with the Franco-German War. The defeat of France destroyed every hope of revenge for 1864, and the influence of the Paris Commune stirred many minds to violent activity. It was because Brandes found the liberating word for the thought of the time that the effect of his appearance was so tremendous.

GEORG BRANDES (1842–1927) had hitherto been on the best of terms with official Denmark. The son of a Jewish merchant and a native of Copenhagen, he had taken his master's degree in Esthetics and had by his brilliant talent attracted attention both as a Hegelian esthetician and as a critic and essayist, in which fields his keen, dazzling style and his ability to enter psychologically into his theme had already reached a high degree of excellence (*Esthetic Studies,* 1868, *Critiques and Portraits,* 1870). But his development had gradually led him away from Hegel and from the latter's Danish disciple, J. L. Heiberg. In France Brandes had found new masters in Sainte-Beuve and Taine, and in his doctorial thesis on Taine (1870), where he still makes certain critical reservations, he gives a complete presentation of the doctrine concerning race, environment, and epoch which became decisive for the first volumes of *Main Currents.*

As a newly created doctor Brandes made, in 1870–71, an extensive tour of England, France, and Italy

and filled himself with impressions of men, of nature, and of art, opening his receptive mind to all the new thoughts of the time. He came in personal contact with such men as Stuart Mill and Renan, and met also Ibsen, in whom he found a brother in arms for the coming battle of ideas, the aim of which, in Ibsen's opinion, was nothing less than a "revolt of the soul of man." Brandes returned home to Denmark firmly resolved to "open the door from within" out to the wide world.

His lectures on "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century European Literature" were then nothing less than a declaration of war against the existing state of things. His description of Romanticism's victory over the ideas of the Revolution and of the ensuing great liberal turn of the tide with Byron and Shelley in England, Hugo and his school in France, Heine, Börne, and Young Germany, was plainly aimed at conditions in Denmark, where, in Brandes's opinion, people were forty years behind the times, and where the existing state of intellectual life was "stagnant reaction." This was agitation, politics—not scholarship; the aim was to rouse the nation out of its sluggishness, and there was the fanfare of trumpets in his proclamation of the right of free research and the ultimate victory of free thought. Brandes's description of the intellectual movements in Europe implied, therefore, a condemnation of the situation in Denmark, or it yielded at least a standard for a new valuation of it. The lecturer took a polemic stand against the national self-preoccupation and against the Church. He proclaimed a new philosophy, the Positivism of Comte and the Utilita-

rianism of Mill, and a new system of esthetics, that of Taine and of Naturalism. The aim of literature was seen from a social angle: reality, life—not dreams; and literary art was to work in the service of progress, prove its right to exist by "discussing problems." [1]

The effect was tremendous, on the one side passionate enthusiasm, on the other furious opposition, and the strife that arose was carried on with the utmost violence. To all appearances Brandes lost the fight in the first round; his review bearing the proud name, *The Nineteenth Century,* ceased publication after only three years, and when the hope of a professorship in Esthetics failed, he left the country a disappointed man and took up his residence in Berlin for five years.

But when, after having laid the foundation for his European fame, he returned in 1882, he had in reality conquered. In literature, the writing of the 80's was governed entirely by ideas from *Main Currents,* while in politics, Brandesianism had become a mighty factor through its alliance with the great democratic party of the Left, and in 1884 it found its own European-minded organ in the newspaper *Politiken.* But Brandes had in the meantime grown beyond his ideas of the 70's; as early as 1884 he was obliged, in a reply to political homage, to confess that he was not in the least a democrat. He had abandoned the ethics of Mill; the late re-

[1] These lectures were published in six volumes, 1872–1890: *The Literature of the French Emigrés* (1872), *The Romantic School in Germany* (1873), *Reaction in France* (1874), *Naturalism in England* (1875), *The Romantic School in France* (1882), *Young Germany* (1890).

former of society had become an aristocratic individualist. Already in *Main Currents* his interest in the individual, the personality, had little by little won the upper hand over his interest in ideas, although the title of the work promised a history of the latter; and before and during his residence in Berlin he had published a series of brilliant monographs on significant personalities: *Sören Kierkegaard* (1877), *Esaias Tegnér* (1878), *Benjamin Disraeli* (1881), *Ferdinand Lassalle* (1881), and *Ludvig Holberg* (1884). In the last mentioned work a new hero worship becomes decidedly apparent.

Brandes felt that he now had the Philistines of culture on his side, and that one could no longer be nourished on the thoughts and views of the foregoing decade. Something new must be put in place of the trivial repetition of the same teachings: "Certain theories of heredity, with a little Darwinism, a little emancipation of women, a little morality of happiness, a little free thought, a little cult of the people," etc. That something new came with his discovery of Friedrich Nietzsche.

It was the positivist Nietzsche of *Zur Genealogie der Moral,* the Voltairian and the enemy of Christianity, that Brandes understood and had use for, while he took his stand far removed from the religiosity of *Zarathustra,* and in 1889 he outlined his new program in the treatise *Aristocratic Radicalism*. He is a decided adherent of Nietzsche's master morality. In opposition to the earthbound Naturalism of the day he sets up the "great personality full of ideas," the great man as the source and aim of culture, the superman. True art is no longer that

which is satisfied with ideas and ideals for the average and the mediocre; great art tears itself away from the multitude, seeks defiant independence, "aristocratic absolutism." The reference to Nietzsche became a powerful weapon in the hands of the generation which now, about 1890, was to topple Naturalism from its throne. It is the greatness of Brandes to have been once more in alliance with the time.

In Nietzsche's spirit is written that beautiful and brilliant work on Shakespeare (1895–96), Brandes's most characteristic work and his weightiest, debatable from the scholarly standpoint both in method and in its details, but ingenious as a piece of artistically executed literary psychology.

With the Shakespeare book Brandes's actual significance for the intellectual life of Denmark ceases. Even though up to the last he took part in the strife of the day, it was felt by all that he belonged to the past. Outwardly he gained the respectful recognition of official Denmark through the change in the political system in 1901 when the Left came into power, but at the same time younger and more significant critics, Harald Nielsen and—later—Helge Rode, began the appraisal of and the reaction from his life's work. In the years before the World War he was occupied with the publication of his *Collected Writings* in 18 volumes, to which were added some groups of essays, chiefly selections of newspaper articles, showing by the variety of their subjects the writer's position as a European celebrity.

During the World War, when Brandes had

reached an advanced age, there began a new fruitful period in his literary career. Besides a few collections of essays on the war itself, acrid expressions of the ever growing contempt for mankind which had gradually gained the ascendancy in him, there appeared during this time four most extensive works: *Wolfgang Goethe* (1915), *François de Voltaire* (1916–17), *Caius Julius Caesar* (1918), and *Michelangelo Buonarotti* (1921), physically an imposing achievement, evidence of the intellectual vigor and the immense capacity for work which he still retained. Common to all these works is a species of hero worship in which one always finds traces of a desire to discover and emphasize the special Brandesian characteristics of the great minds. This often mars and distorts a picture which in other respects is drawn in lively colors and with bold perspicuity.

In the intellectual life of the North no one has caused such strife and resentment as did Georg Brandes—even his very latest anti-theological studies, *Jesus, A Myth* (*Sagnet om Jesus,* 1925), and others, evoked most violent protests; concerning no leading mind is there so sharp a division of opinion as in his case. His great importance is not due to scholarly superiority. He is a pronounced eclectic in his philosophy, and in literary research his method lacks sureness, calm objectivity in judgement, and critical patience towards his source material. But this is inherent in his personality itself. "His deepest and most lasting significance depends less upon what he has proclaimed and taught than upon the intellectual image and the living example which has been impressed by him upon the minds of others, and

upon the rich spiritual unrest he has stirred up, reaching to the very foundations of society," writes the Danish critic, Valdemar Vedel.

He is first and foremost the agitator, the fiery soul. His passion is more violent, his emotions are more pronounced both in enthusiasm and in hate, and his method of expression is more precise, keener, and more forcible than sedate Denmark had been accustomed to. Therefore he has been an awakener and a leader as no other man has been. He was a decided partisan both in his interpretation and in his judgement. Critical liberalism was far from him; he went to literature to find advocates for his cause or in order to fight his opponents, and time after time he handled those who disagreed with him without mercy—and he was repaid in full measure in the same coin.

But with the years he grew lonely. His aristocratic individualism had gradually developed into a sort of Caesarism, and at the same time his contempt for the mob and for human stupidity had grown to an uncomfortable degree. To this was added, especially in the later years, a strange mixture of naïve self-glorification and an irritable sensitiveness to supposed persecutions on the part of that world for which he himself had never tired of showing his disdain.

As an author his strength is psychology; he had an unusual ability to read and to teach others to read. The best he produced is in the literary portrait where, with a few strokes, he draws a living picture, and characterizes his subject by means of a series of delicately apprehended details. As an essay-

ist he is the most important in the North. In this field his mastery of language, his brilliant, clear, and witty style achieve their full effect. (*Danish Poets,* 1877, *The Men of the Modern Awakening,* 1883, *Men and Works in the Newer European Literature,* 1883, and others.) His essays show the extent and depth of his understanding, but also its limitations. Towards the religious problem he stands uncomprehending, the doctrinaire Voltairian.

He has been a symbol of strife and dissension, but no one has been able to be indifferent to him. One must choose; for or against. It is only the later years that have paved the way for a soberer and more objective appraisal of this trail breaker in the intellectual life of Denmark.

While Brandes's disciples proper in the 70's distinguished themselves more by party fidelity than by talent, his commanding example acted as an intellectual emancipation upon two young literary men whose artistic careers otherwise went their own ways. These were J. P. Jacobsen and Holger Drachmann. Both made their first appearance in the winter of 1871–72 in the new magazine of radical views, *The New Danish Monthly.*

Jens Peter Jacobsen (1847–1885) was born in the little town of Thisted in North Jutland; his father was a merchant. From boyhood on his chief interest was natural science; botany was his professional study, and a treatise on the desmidiaceæ won for him the University's gold medal. A decisive factor in his career was his study of Darwin, whose teachings he dealt with in a series of treatises,

and whose chief works he translated: *Origin of Species* (1872), *The Descent of Man* (1875). The theory of Evolution gave him a new outlook on life, based altogether on Nature. At the same time the appearance of Brandes had brought to him a clear conception of the aims and means of literature. He discarded the immature attempts—part of them in the spirit of Romanticism—with which he had been struggling for some years, and his maiden literary work, the novelette *Mogens,* is the program of a literary transition.

Mogens (1872) is the first Naturalistic novelette in Danish literature. What is significant in it is not the quite improbable action, but the *milieu,* the background of Nature. From having been in the older literature a mere adjunct, Nature becomes the very soil from which the action springs and whereby it is explained. The new Naturalism manifests itself decidedly in the masterly descriptions of the rainstorm and of the fire. One notes, especially in the style, some influence of H. C. Andersen, but even more conscious and more pronounced than in Andersen—and it is this that is new in Jacobsen—is the close relation to outward reality, the effort to reproduce it as precisely as possible. It is for this reason that the author works out all the details so carefully and fastidiously. He follows a movement—the coming of rain, for example—in all its articulations; he seeks always to transpose all the impressions of the senses into pregnant expressions, and these again demand a new style, retuning the language of prose. The vocabulary is extended and refined; the language is worked over from a musical

J. P. JACOBSEN
ching by Axel Helsted

HOLGER DRACHMANN
Painting by
P. S. Kröyer

standpoint; inversions and alliterations give the sentences their particular tonal hues, and the periods are harmonized into rhythmical unities. Even in this, his first work, Jacobsen has found his individual place in the history of literature.

In 1876 followed his chief work, the historical novel, *Marie Grubbe, A Lady of the Seventeenth Century* (*Marie Grubbe, Interiörer fra det 17 Aarhundrede*). Jacobsen—clearly influenced by the writings of Flaubert—wished to give a complete picture of the fate of a human being inevitably determined by original characteristics, upbringing, and the entire surrounding milieu, and he has chosen as his central character a historical person, the nobleman's daughter from Jutland, Marie Grubbe, who as a young woman was the wife of Ulrik Frederik Gyldenlöve, a King's son, and who after a tempestuous life ended her days in the ferryman's cottage at Falster as the wife of the humble ferryman, Sören. But the author's chief interest is captured by the interiors of this colorful and full-blooded baroque period. The book signifies a renaissance of the historical novel; here, too, the aim is realism, actuality, and the means for attaining it is a prodigiously thorough research, after the manner of Flaubert, both in archives and in libraries. The pictures themselves have a hitherto unknown genuineness and a wealth of surprising details, but it is undoubtedly a mistake that Jacobsen, in order to complete the illusion, permitted his characters to use the speech of their time. Not only did he encounter philological difficulties (confusion of the seventeenth century book language with everyday speech), but occasion-

ally—especially in the case of Sti Hög, who represents the romantic *Weltschmerz*—there is an effect of anachronism, due to the contrast between the old-fashioned speech and what is, after all, a modern train of thought.

During the writing of *Marie Grubbe* Jacobsen became seriously ill of tuberculosis; it was soon evident to him that he had not long to live, and his last twelve years with the many fruitless journeys to the South became a stubborn, continuous fight with death, which, after long suffering, overtook him at Thisted in 1885. After *Marie Grubbe* he published only two books.

The novel *Niels Lyhne* (1880) is a story of his own time. The action ends, it is true, in 1864, when Niels dies after being wounded in the war, but the book bears the impress of the conflict of the 70's between the old and the new, and it is more personal than the strictly objective *Marie Grubbe*. It is a novel of development and a problem novel. Its theme—the dreamer who learns to resign himself to reality, learns "to live life as it is, to let life form itself according to life's own laws"—is the story of the author's own development. The style is more over-refined and has more mannerisms than in Jacobsen's other longer works, but the characterization goes deep, especially in Niels's relations to the women in his life: Edele, Mrs. Boye, Fennimore, and Gerda.

In 1882 came a little collection of short stories, of which the most important are *The Pestilence in Bergamo*, a thrilling scene from the Italian Renaissance, and *Fru Fönss*, the author's last work, which

with its poignant mood of death is as if it were his own farewell to life. After Jacobsen's death his friend Edvard Brandes brought out *Poems and Sketches*, in which are collected his beautiful and characteristic lyrics and also his youthful literary attempts before *Mogens*.

Jacobsen is decidedly a leading figure in the new movement, which was to conquer in the course of the 70's and 80's, and whose motto is taken from his poems: "Light over our land—it is that we desire." He is characteristic of his time, in his Darwinian conception of life, in the leading ideas of his literary work, and in his technique which is related to French Naturalism. *Niels Lyhne* especially is plainly problem writing; besides its main theme it deals also with ethical problems: marriage and free love—and with religious ones: atheism. But in contrast with Georg Brandes, Jacobsen is always positive. He builds, but never tears down, never ridicules his opponents, never marshals tendential sympathies and antipathies. The writer must explain, not judge, he said.

In his art he attains completeness within a limited compass in short stories such as *The Pestilence in Bergamo* and *Fru Fönss* and in many of the poems, particularly the two unrhymed *Arabesques*. His long novels are weak in composition; the treatment of the theme becomes more and more summary as the action progresses; it is as if the author wearied as he worked. His style, which was so greatly admired and so often imitated, is now often felt to be over-refined, heavy, and inflexible. But his characterization of human beings, his ab-

sorption in the secrets of the soul, is so penetrating, the example of living he presents is so noble and lofty, that Jacobsen's name still stands as one of the greatest in Danish literature.

The effect of his literary work was tremendous, not only in his own country, but throughout the entire Germanic world—great and not always fortunate; his imitators had more feeling for the peculiarities of the style than for the depth of his soul portraiture.

While it was his own positivistic conception of life that compelled Jacobsen to ally himself with Brandes, it was that side of the latter's teaching which pointed to social revolution that took hold on another great writer, Holger Drachmann. He was in his entire being Jacobsen's born antithesis—the man of feeling with a flair for external effect, where Jacobsen was the quiet, self-contained ironist; restless and tempestuous, where Jacobsen was calm and steadfast; enormously luxuriant and productive to the point of carelessness, where Jacobsen sat and caressed his adjectives and his periods; the skald of Romanticism, the wandering troubadour, contrasted with the scientifically schooled experimenter in Naturalism; subjective through and through in contrast with Jacobsen's strict objectivity.

Holger Drachmann (1846–1908) was the son of an esteemed naval surgeon, and he had loved the sea from his boyhood when he often accompanied his father on boat trips to the sea forts or the warships. He did not, however, go to sea, but entered the University in accordance with his father's

wishes, and chose thereupon to become an artist, a marine painter. He painted dashing, effective pictures with a fresh grasp of his themes, and at the same time he mingled in young, radical-minded artistic circles. A long sea trip to Scotland and the South broadened his horizon. In 1871 he was in London, suffered privation, and frequented the laborers' quarters about the docks, where the prevalent poverty and the awakening Socialism, brought by the refugees of the Paris Commune, made a deep impression upon him. On his return home the same year he heard Brandes's lectures which kindled into flame all that had been smouldering in his mind. He had previously shown himself as a talented journalist in his travel correspondence for *The New Danish Monthly*. Now the poet in him came to light. Under the pseudonym "Mark Cole" the magazine presented in its November number a flaming revolutionary poem, *English Socialists*, with some stylistic flaws in the pathos of its tone and in the theatrical effects of its composition, but powerful and violent, agitatorial and at the same time graphic. It was clear proof of a great and original talent.

As it was the revolution in Brandes's teaching that first attracted Drachmann to him, so in Drachmann's first collections of verse, *Poems* (1872) and *Muted Melodies* (1875), it was not least the social and political conflicts between the obdurate old faction and the conquering new that inspired him. But still there was much in the form of his poetry that was traditional and impersonal.

It was not until the following years and in his later books that his literary personality was com-

pletely manifested. His first marriage with his charming child bride was dissolved after only two years, and a new passionate love came into his life. And now—as always in the years that followed—it was his profound personal experience that determined the course of his writing as of his life. His mental absorption in his inner self is seen in those novels in which the influence of Turgenev is present, *A Supernumerary* (1876) and *Tannhaüser* (1877). At the same time he sought to lift himself above the party squabbles of his own country in the travel book *Over There from the Border* (1877). Because of its glorification of the fight for nationality being waged by the Danish people of South Jutland under Prussian rule, and its disrespectful attitude toward the inner politics of Denmark, this book was a painful surprise to his internationally minded friends, but was, on the other hand, hailed with enthusiasm by the Conservative press. Drachmann's need for beauty and his admiration for the heroic and the extraordinary revolted against the narrow limitations of problem literature and against the sad, gray commonplace of Realism, where "the day offered stock-fish" and there was "nought but Lenten fare upon the table." He broke away in his fairy tale poem, *The Princess and Half the Kingdom* (1878), in his national epic, *Peder Tordenskjold* (1880), and in his sailor stories, which gave him romance in the present time, *On a Sailor's Word and Promise* (1878) and others. In spite of constant veering from side to side, his course deviated more and more away from Brandes and the literary Left.

This tendency found its clearest expression, how-

ever, not in the above-mentioned tales in verse and prose, but in three large and much more important collections of poetry, *Songs by the Sea* (1877), *Vines and Roses* (1879), and *Youth in Poetry and Song* (1879). These constituted Drachmann's lyric revival and the crown of the poetry of his youth.

This lyricism has many prototypes. Among Danish poets, Oehlenschläger, Winther, and Aarestrup; among foreigners, Ibsen and Björnson, also Swinburne, of the moderns; among the older poets especially Heine and Byron, particularly the latter with his heedless ego worship, his desire to scandalize the citizenry, and his predilection for the hero pose and for bravado. In this connection it should be mentioned that Drachmann has produced an excellent translation of Byron's *Don Juan*. But all Drachmann's poetry bears its peculiar stamp, as if it were flooded with the poet's personality; back of the poetry one learns to know the man: a man of moods, vacillating and soft in character, but of an open-hearted honesty, a directness, for whom all dissimulation is an impossibility. As Danish literature had never before seen such a manifest baring of a poet's soul, neither had it seen such a facile and luxuriant imagination, such an artistic richness, or such utter linguistic virtuosity. His lyric art is equal to anything from the lightly breathed dream vision in the wonderful poem *Sakuntala* and the Venetian fantasies in *Songs by the Sea* to the monumental sculptural style or the absolutely plain, popular narrative. He has a wider range than the older poets; the pliant and dreamy elements in his art have burst the compactness and clearness of the

earlier poesy. He experiments constantly with fuller rhythms in which the dancing parlando tone dissolves, as it were, the old, measured meters; he struggles with strophe constructions that are more and more daring and complicated. The words become music, and his lyrics, particularly in the three collections mentioned, have been a gold mine for the composers of the North.

The section entitled "Songs to a Sister" in *Youth in Poetry and Song* marks another turning point in Drachmann's career. In 1879 he contracted a new marriage, and in the following period his art came to serve quite another spirit than before. He became the poet of the hearth and home; the people at large, the sound citizenry, took the place of the revolutionary proletariat which he depicted in *English Socialists.* He threw down the gauntlet to the French spirit, the demoralizing Naturalism, and broke completely with Brandes. This period is marked by two important works: the fairy tale poem, *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* (1880), and the collection of poems, *Old Gods and New* (1881). The first is a beautiful and mature version of a Northern legend of the Amor and Psyche type; in the other, and especially in the two reflective poems, *Our Mother's Saga* and *The Lost Paradise,* Drachmann attains a greatness and simplicity in thought and a monumental quality of expression which reminds one of Victor Hugo. To this period belongs also his most popular work, the fairy tale comedy, *Once Upon a Time* (1887), whose production was a dramatic triumph because of its national tone, its effective scenes with their

splendid settings, and because of its fascinating theme: the proud, capricious Princess, who is disciplined in life's hard school, and whose love teaches her to become worthy of the Prince whom in her arrogance she had first disdained. Up to the present time it is one of the most frequently produced Danish plays; a considerable part of its popular favor must, however, be ascribed to the music of Lange-Müller.

In spite of all this, it cannot be denied that these years show a weakening in Drachmann's literary work. A new revolution in his life was needed to bring a new freshness and a new blossoming to his art. And the revolution came. A new passion gripped him with all its power, tore him out of his domesticity, away from wife and children, from good society and the esteem of his fellow-citizens. The woman was a singer in a suburban variety theater; the name by which she was known and her real entity are of no importance; in Drachmann's writing, where she appears under many names: Schëitan, Esther, Suleima, Gerd, but most frequently Edith, she is a Muse, a dream vision of fineness and nobility of soul. Their first meeting is described in the weak novel *With the Wide Brush,* and under the new, mighty inspiration the poet grows; his fantasy glows again, and his passion attains new power in the two masterly dramatic poems, *Turkish Rococo* and *Esther* (1888), and in the Oriental play, *A Thousand and One Nights* (1889), until his literary work culminates in his two most profound and most personal works, the collection of poems, *The Book of Songs* (1889) and the novel, *Signed Away* (1890).

The Book of Songs, which rightfully bears its proud name, sings of the poet's new youth, but the tone is not care-free as before; back of the feeling of happiness is a dull pain—"the deep sadness of manhood and the full joy of youth." The heart of the collection is the large cycle of poems, *Suleima,* influenced in form by Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan.* This cycle is really a description of Drachmann's entire relation with Edith. It is more intimate and more humble in tone than anything in the earlier work of this self-conscious poet. *Signed Away,* a long two-volume novel and a masterpiece of Danish prose, contains Drachmann's settlement of accounts with his time and with himself. In the two chief characters, Henrik Gerhard and Ulf Brynjulfsen, he has split his own personality; the one is a worker, and the other is a visionary, and he has judged himself with keen psychological insight and with a self-criticism that strikes deep. In his description of the surroundings in which the action takes place—Gerhard's breaking away, because of his love for Edith, from the domesticity to which he had pledged himself by his marriage—he has given an excellent, though one-sided, picture of his time and of his native town at a critical transition period. As a novel the book is a monster, prodigiously diffuse, filled with every possible ancient trick and outworn invention of the novelist. But as a confession and an apology it is a psychological document of the first rank; its delineation of human beings is so fine and so profound that it quite puts the professional realists to shame, and it is written in a style which in certain sections of the book succeeds in lifting

and transforming even the flattest and most commonplace things into a new and mystical sphere of beauty. Drachmann has never before or since found such living and such striking expressions for that mixture of *menschlich-allzumenschlich* which is his strength and his weakness.

The following years are wholly in the sign of Edith, but one notes that the relationship is gradually being loosened. There is something forced and hectic about the books of these years, at times something positively perverse and unhealthy. There is a desperate gallows humor in *Young Ballads* (1892), written during his and Edith's stay in Hamburg at the time of the cholera. These poems in many ways revive the revolutionary lyricism of his youth. There is gallows humor, too, in the knightly romance, *Kitzwalde* (1895). But his desperation is most clearly expressed in his plays, particularly in the so-called "Melodramas," bearing a lyric stamp in their compact form, with characters drawn in quick, broad strokes, and with colorful, violent themes. The most important is *Völund the Smith* (1894), in which Drachmann—influenced both by Shakespeare and especially by Wagner—has taken the skillful smith of *The Poetic Edda* as the basis for a heroic picture in his own likeness, a new and powerful expression of his literary ego. Among the other "Melodramas" one might mention *Renaissance*, *Medieval*, *Snefrid*, and *The Dance at Koldinghus* (1895). In the naïve but poetic play, *Honest Fellow* (1898), the Edith episode is relived in medieval guise in the persons of Junker Kai and the faithful goose girl, Gerd, but in the notable collection of

prose and verse *The Sacred Fire* (1899) it is a thing of the past, and nothing remains but emptiness and pain.

When the Edith period ended Drachmann had become an old man, although in years he had only just passed fifty. The last ten years of his life, in the course of which he contracted a third marriage, were merely an echo. He had emptied himself in his writing; of the books of this period only two have literary value: the melancholy *Church and Organ* (1904) and the posthumous *Vagabundus* fragments (1910).

Outwardly his position was established. In the beginning of the 90's a reconciliation had taken place between him and Brandes, and at the turn of the century he stood in the minds of the people as the Danish poet-king. Yet the situation was not without tragedy; not only because his production now was merely a repetition of the fullness and power of his youth, but also because in reality he failed to comprehend the age, just as the age failed to comprehend him.

For Holger Drachmann stands as a great anachronism in a prosaic and wisely-stupid age. In his life and in his art he was the undomestic romanticist, the "hoary skald," a head taller than all the people, and filled with a belief in his calling and in his distinctive position. He was the uncompromising, inordinate ego worshipper, the viking, the footloose journeyman, the free lance, in a time when the slogan—politically and socially—was combination and organization. While his age struggled with problem after problem, he had but one theme for

his art: Holger Drachmann himself, and, like Rousseau, he was recklessly honest.

His art bears traces of its too hurried and too uncritical creation. Rarely is a lyric poem entirely free from blemish, and the longer works all have their faults. But his art also bears everywhere the stamp of genius; even in the otherwise so unsuccessful works of his old age the charm and raciness of his diction are not to be denied.

2: NORWAY

The decisive, victorious impetus of the new school really came, not from Denmark, but from Norway. The turn of the tide was determined first and foremost by the contributions made by Henrik Ibsen and Björnstjerne Björnson, partly as adherents of Georg Brandes, and partly under his influence.

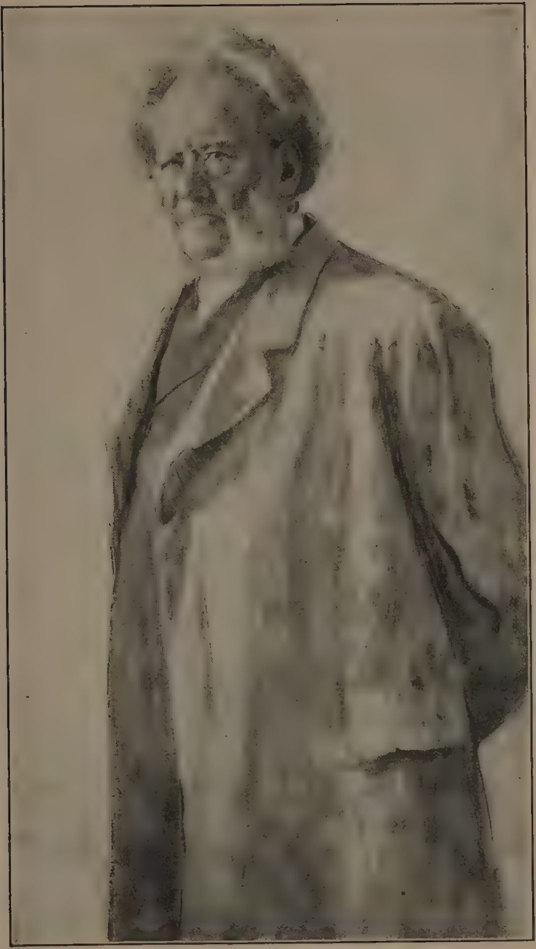
It may be said for both of these writers that the first, and not the least important, half of their literary production comes before the breaking through of Realism in the 1870's. But in this connection only the work coming after that time will be considered.

HENRIK IBSEN (1828–1906), whose romantic period had culminated in the chief works, *The Pretenders* (1864), *Brand* (1866), and *Peer Gynt* (1867), had with the publication of his great dual drama, *Emperor and Galilean* (1873), reached the turning point in his literary life. This work pictures the revolt of Julian the Apostate against Christianity and his defeat in the fight against it, his very oppressions giving it new life. But back of the conflicting views of the various protagonists the author

has created in the person of Maximos, the mystic, a new conception of life, the "Third Realm," which is to unite Law and Liberty, and which is founded upon the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of the Cross together. The thought is dimly and obscurely expressed, but it may be perceived in Ibsen's later works, in *Rosmersholm,* in *The Master Builder,* and in *Little Eyolf.*

Already in 1869 he had tried his hand at present-day drama in the biting comedy, *The League of Youth.* In its form the play shows that he is still strongly influenced by Scribe, but the precise characterization in the dialogue presages his long series of dramas dealing with his own time; indeed, the motives of several of them may be found in this play. In the same year he wrote the poem *To My Friend the Revolutionary Orator* where the noted phrase "placing a torpedo under the ark" occurs. Here he first declared war against established society, which in his rhymed letter of 1875 he likened to the ship that "sails with a corpse in the cargo"; and in December, 1870, he invited Brandes to join him in work for "the revolt of the soul of man."

Then came *The Pillars of Society* in 1877. Ibsen was then nearly fifty years old, and it is from this work that his European fame dates. In the description of Consul Bernick and his circle he attacks the conventional hypocrisy and lack of honesty in good society. Truth and liberty are, he declares, the true pillars of society. But the piece is not important. The action is too much like that of a popular comedy; the characterization does not depart much



HENRIK IBSEN
From a Painting by Erik Werenskiold

from the purely traditional, and his treatment of the problem does not go deep.

Much more important is *A Doll's House* (1879). Technically considered, this is Ibsen's first masterpiece. Surely and skillfully the action is concentrated about the catastrophe; what has happened before the play opens is gradually revealed while at the same time it becomes a potent factor in the action. Everything is really settled before the curtain rises on the first act; when the last veil concealing the past is lifted the fates of the persons in the play are thereby sealed. This peculiar "technique of uncovering," known from such ancient tragedies as *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles and from such newer works as Schiller's *Braut von Messina* and the problem plays of the younger Dumas, is now developed with a constantly growing mastery by Ibsen, and through his plays it has become typical for dramatists over the whole of Europe.

A Doll's House boldly brings in question several of the most burning problems of the time. Nora as opposed to Helmer is personal morality as opposed to the morality of the community; her development from the macaroon-munching "lark" to the emancipated personality who abandons home and children was a plea for the independence of the woman, the wife, and wherever the play was produced it aroused the most violent controversy.

If minds were stirred by *A Doll's House*, they were amazed and outraged by the next work, *Ghosts* (1881). In this play the attack upon social hypocrisy was more dangerous than before, and the theme

was much more precarious and disagreeable. Darwinism is the postulate for this stirring proclamation of the truth that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children; and society's false conception of morality, which compelled Helen Alving to continue to live with her dissipated husband, is branded as the real cause of the catastrophe. But there is more to the play than the problems of heredity and marriage and the discussions between the old and the new views of life. It is essentially a modern tragedy, and in Mrs. Alving's desperate fight for her son, Ibsen has almost attained the grandeur of the tragedies of ancient times.

The reception that was accorded *Ghosts* angered Ibsen deeply. There came now a new turn in his views on "the revolt of the soul of man." His answer to the attacks made upon him because of *Ghosts* is *An Enemy of the People* (1882), in which the author, in the person of Dr. Stockmann, turns violently against democracy, "the damned compact majority," and declares that he is strongest who stands alone. The next play, *The Wild Duck* (1884), truly Ibsen's most ingenious play, is a deadly squaring of accounts with the Realist's dream of reforming the world—a dream which lives in Ibsen's own early social dramas. Gregers Werle, who presents his "claim of the ideal" upon mankind, brings about nothing but misfortune, because of his clumsiness. And Ibsen's new nihilistic views as to the possibility of improving mankind—represented here by the phrase-mongering, totally good-for-nothing photographer, Hjalmar Ekdal, a skillfully drawn picture of wide scope—is formulated in

the play by the skeptic, Dr. Relling: "Rob the average man of his life-illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same stroke."[1]

With *The Wild Duck* Ibsen definitely abandons social problems. His work now seeks its themes in the great personality, and his development thereby forms a close parallel with that of Georg Brandes, who in the same years turned from democratic utilitarianism to Nietzsche. At the same time Realism is in the later plays crowded more and more into the background by the Symbolism which is to be traced already in *Ghosts*, and gives to *The Wild Duck* not the least of the elements that contribute to its distinctive character. *Rosmersholm* (1886) shows the new course. Ibsen has here presented his ideal superman in the noble Johannes Rosmer, "the aristocrat," conquering the unscrupulous Rebecca West, who loves him and has balked at no expedient to win him, but who now—when all obstacles are cleared away—finds, under the influence of his personality, an insurmountable obstacle in her own conscience.

A weaker play is *The Lady from the Sea* (1888), which with its all too obvious symbolism and its rather flat doctrine of "liberty with responsibility," seems to the reader of today to be German in the unfavorable sense of that term. *Hedda Gabler* (1890) pictures with demoniac power the amoral estheticism with its life-weariness under the outer empty worship of beauty; it is one of Ibsen's most effective works, but is coal-black in its pessimism without a single relieving element.

[1] The original has *livslögnen*, literally the life-lie.

The last great work in the series is *The Master Builder* (1892), a purely symbolic drama. It is the "Beyond Human Power" tragedy of the genius; the great artist, who has been egged on to attempt the impossible, and who is therefore overtaken by a castigating Nemesis. But it has at the same time a deeply personal character. One is reminded of Ibsen's own development in that of the Master Builder: he has first built churches, then homes for people, and now he wishes to build "air castles with foundations under them." The fear that the aging Solness had of youth, in which he was at the same time intensely interested, is similar to Ibsen's own attitude toward the younger generation which had grown up when, in 1891, he returned to Norway after an exile of many years.

Already in *The Master Builder* one feels that Ibsen's sure grasp of his theme is failing; old age is upon him, and his last works show decided signs of it. Even though these plays are interesting in their train of thought, and though they contain beautiful details, yet they are for the most part repetitions of earlier themes. Particularly weak is *Little Eyolf* (1894), where Ibsen (as in *Rosmersholm*) busies himself with the thought of the "Law of Transmutation." There is typical interest in the gruesome *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896), where the characters are as if petrified and spiritually frozen stiff; the love life has been slain in them, it is said. *When We Dead Awaken* (1899) is described by Ibsen himself as an epilogue to his literary work. Its bitter view of life and art—the artist who sacrifices the man in him on the altar of art—and its

longing for the romantic idealism of his youth must be read as a personal confession. The mood of his last two plays reminds one strangely of the despairing poem, *The Miner,* which he wrote in 1851, at the beginning of his literary career.

Henrik Ibsen's modern dramas belong to the literature of the world. His renown was first established in Germany, but it soon spread over the rest of Europe. He has to a very considerable degree set his stamp on the history of the drama at the close of the nineteenth century; among his followers may be mentioned such writers as Gerhard Hauptmann, Bernard Shaw, and François de Curel. It is not until the last decades that his influence seems to be superseded by the dramatic work of the Russians and of Strindberg.

He overawed the world with his brilliant technique, by means of which he was able surely and splendidly to compress wide-embracing material into a narrow dramatic form, not unlike that of the French classical tragedy, in such a manner that the action seemed to be stamped with irrefutable logic. He captured the mind with his discussion of problems; when Ibsen regularly every other year shortly before Christmas brought out his new play, it was an event far beyond the boundaries of the North. He dazzled his audiences and his readers by his profundities, by the continual riddles that were posed, the many questions to which they received no answers ("I only ask, 'tis not my task to answer," he said in his rhymed letter to Georg Brandes), the pregnant sententious shibboleths that ring out as leading motives throughout his works

and seem to open up deep perspectives for us. He overawed the world, and at his death his admirers spoke his name in the same breath with those of Shakespeare and Goethe.

In this there is surely a considerable overvaluation, and the reaction has, indeed, already begun to make itself felt. In the first place, his technique, when carefully probed, shows over-elaboration and calculation back of the so much admired naturalness. There is too much "theater" in it; the action is cut to a pattern as if for a sum that *must* work out, a problem that *must* be solved. One contrasts life's natural diversity with his carefully constructed, strong concentration, and its mingling of light and dark with the stiff Ibsenesque solemnity and the biting, unsmiling Ibsenesque wit.

Many of his themes have lost their interest; many a problem which once was new and startling has long since lost its actuality, and theoretical discussions have made us strangers to the situations in *Pillars of Society,* in *A Doll's House,* and even in parts of *Ghosts.*

Finally, offense has been taken at the Ibsenesque profundity; efforts have been made to sound the depths of his famous obscurity, and too often it has been found that it has its root in the cloudiness of his thought rather than in its depth. Ibsen has been reproached too for his lack of real human sympathy; his positive works, such as *The Lady from the Sea* and *Little Eyolf,* are, significantly enough, his weakest. Only in a few of his women characters is there any real warmth. For the most part his work is dominated by the anchorite's cold hostility to life,

in marked contrast to the poetry of life that we find in the writings of a Shakespeare, a Goethe and—here in the North—a Björnson.

But it is not yet possible to make a final estimate of his work. Although much that was once admired in his writing has lost its significance, yet such works as *The Pretenders*, *Brand*, and *Peer Gynt*, together with *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, and *The Master Builder* will always hold their place among the best literature that the North has produced.

A complete antithesis to Henrik Ibsen, both as a personality and as a writer, is his great contemporary, BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON (1832–1910). As Ibsen is the skeptical critic, so Björnson is the inspired prophet. As Ibsen is the solitary, secluded sphinx of the North who holds himself aloof from the world about him, so Björnson is the open-hearted chieftain, always active as a guide and leader, whether or not he has been called upon, wherever the strife is most violent and the clamor of battle is loudest.

For this reason, Björnson's life from 1870 until his death in 1910 is much more than the story of his writing. His significance in Norway as an arouser and educator of the people, as a political personage and a moral leader, is just as great as his significance as a writer. Thus we find that, time after time, when his social and political interests take the upper hand, his literary production ceases for several years, as, for example, from 1879 to 1882 and from 1889 to 1894. His life, apart from his writing, cannot be

considered in detail here. It was occupied with political battles; at home there was the fight for the democratic party of the Left against the party of the Right which was then in power, and later—after the Left had finally won the victory—there was the fight for national unity against the dissensions of the parties. Then there was the strife concerning the Union with Sweden, for maintaining Norway's independence and position of equality within the Union, all of which, in its various phases, led to the dissolution of the Union in 1905. The Scandinavianism of his youth remained, even though it sometimes changed its form, but in his old age he busied himself with political ideas of a wider scope, such as the cause of peace and arbitration. He threw himself boldly into the Dreyfus case on the side of Zola, and in the last years of his life, as "the conscience of Europe," he eloquently pleaded the cause of the oppressed nations: the people of North Slesvig, the Finns, and the Slovaks. From this background of action, his work derives its sound vigor and its warm humanity.

About the year 1870 Björnson had, like Ibsen, finished with the romantic writing of his youth. In that year he published the freshly vigorous epic *Arnljot Gelline* and his rich and important collection, *Poems and Songs*. Up to this time his genius had unfolded itself in two genres, the historical drama and the novel of peasant life. Of the dramas the most important are *Lame Hulda*, the *Sigurd Slembe* trilogy, and *Mary Stuart in Scotland*. To these was now added the national festival play, *Sigurd the Crusader* (1872). In 1873 came a col-

lected edition in two volumes of the peasant novels, well conceived and warmly felt though somewhat idealized tales of the Norwegian peasants. This edition included the earlier tales, *Synnöve Solbakken, Arne, A Happy Boy, The Fisher Maiden,* and several others, and in addition a new and beautiful story, *The Bridal March.* Björnson took his stand at that time on the principles of Christianity. His prototype was Grundtvig, the Danish poet, popular educator, and pastor, in whose splendid Folk High School idea he was deeply interested. In 1874 he bought the estate Aulestad, in Gausdal, in the hope that he would thereby come in close touch with the leading men in the Norwegian Folk High School movement.

But in the years toward 1880 a gradual growth took place in his mind, a spiritual emancipation, in which link was joined to link in his development. Without any break he was led completely away from his firm stand on the faith of his childhood and from Grundtvigianism's preoccupation with the common people. The war of 1870–71 taught him much; he now saw the future in victorious Germany, and he demanded that the North "change its signals" toward its neighbor to the south, who had, since the Danish-German war of 1864, been looked upon as a hereditary enemy. There was much bitter feeling in Denmark when he maintained Pan-Germanism to be the goal of the future. Although he was, for the time being, not wholly in accord with Georg Brandes, he felt that the latter's words about "bringing up problems for debate" held a message for him more than for anyone else in the North. The

realistic drama of the present, which he had previously attempted only in the colorless but charming little play, *The Newly Married Couple* (1865), became from 1875 until his death his favorite form of art.

The beginning was made in 1875 with *The Editor* and *The Bankrupt*. *The Editor,* in whose central figure one of Björnson's political opponents is depicted, is a personification of hateful journalistic persecution and unmerciful partisan fanaticism. In this piece Björnson is still uncertain in his effects and weak in dramatic art. *The Bankrupt* (*En fallit*), on the other hand, was an epoch-making play which became a European success and paved the way for Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*. This work of Björnson's has kept its freshness because of its able character drawing and its lifelike, spirited action, which culminates in the settlement between the merchant, Tjelde, and the imperious lawyer, Berent. The idea is in a high degree typical of the age, but at the same time it is so worked out that it has universal application. The demand for truth in all things is set up against business morality with its concealment and dishonesty.

A further approachment to the spirit of literary realism is seen in the two following works. The story, *Magnhild* (1877), discusses marriage and demands that it be founded on mutual respect and sympathy. The action takes place in the same surroundings as the tales of peasant life, but in this book the author's interpretation is sober and unromantic. Björnson has now come to see the unsound element in that cult of the peasant which he had

himself helped to create. The interesting play, *The King* (1877), pictures the conflict between an inherited institution and the ideas of the day. Its drift is that monarchy is an anachronism. The King wishes to rejuvenate the monarchy civically, but he is not able to do so. He meets with mistrust and opposition both from the pillars of society and from the republicans, and at the same time he, as a man, becomes a sacrifice to his own idea.

The two following plays are of less interest. *The New System* (1879) is a typical drama of problems and discussions. Under the guise of a bit of Norwegian railway politics, we are shown the thorny pathway of truth in a small, narrow community. *Leonarda* (1879) is a drama of the higher emotions. It deals with a Sappho motive—the mature woman who is loved by a young man, and who gives up her chance for happiness. Tolerance and humanity are contrasted with narrow-mindedness and censoriousness. The work is rich in lyric beauty, but as drama it is weak.

The next great problem which Björnson took up was that of religion. In the years 1876–1879 a radical change had taken place in his attitude toward this question, a change which may already be traced in his vigorous attacks on the State Church in *The King*. His critical judgement of Christianity awoke. The doctrine concerning Hell in particular was a stumbling-block for his optimism, and by degrees one dogma after another went by the board. He ended by giving up his belief in the divinity of Jesus and by regarding theology as humbug. His deeply religious need of faith found a substitute in the

evolutionary teachings of Darwin and Spencer. Even earlier he had declared that "God is in progress," and his belief in evolution became for him a belief in progress, the final triumph of that which is good, of which he sang in his *Hymns*.

He turns, therefore, against the doctrine about a better existence beyond the grave. That life is to be lived here, not renounced in yearnings toward the beyond, is the theme of his novelette *Dust* (1882). In his masterpiece, *Beyond Human Power* (1883) he attacks Christianity because it destroys men by demanding the impossible, that which lies beyond all human power. This very short play—two brief acts—is surely one of the most remarkable dramatic works that the nineteenth century has produced. The scene is laid in Nordland, the wonderful Land of the Midnight Sun, where nothing appears commonplace and nothing seems impossible. The portrait of the pastor, Sang, is drawn with a warmth of admiration, an objectivity and a sympathy which actually nullify the argument of the piece, so that it becomes a gripping picture of religious genius and its power over men. The pastor has the faith which can move mountains; even the prejudiced skeptics are overwhelmed by his greatness and authority. But he is under a tension beyond human power; reality overtakes him at last, and his first doubt kills him. Björnson's art in this piece is incomparable; its world of moods ranges from the gayly comic to the mightiest expression of religious ecstasy, and the action goes forward with a rapturous upward climb, mounting steadily—until the abrupt catastrophe at the end. Björnson wished to pre-

sent the reverse of Ibsen's *Brand*, the human protest against Sören Kierkegaard's highstrung religious idealism, but his art is richer and greater than his purpose.

At the same time that he was considering the religious problem, Björnson busied himself with another question of great importance for the development of the race, the question of moral soundness. He threw himself boldly into the battle for a sexual morality which should demand of both sexes the same standard of purity. The question is raised in *A Gauntlet* (1883), a drama with a purpose. It plays an important role in the long novel *The Heritage of the Kurts* (*Det flager i byen og paa havnen*, 1884), in which Björnson has set down his thoughts on racial heredity and on education. Heredity—so the author optimistically maintains—is merely a modifying circumstance, not a destiny. The art of education consists in combating the undesirable hereditary instincts and in strengthening those which have value. The book tells how a healthy and sensible mother, who has been married to a man of an ungovernable and degenerate family, succeeds in rescuing her son and giving him her own soundness and her own outlook on life. She carries her Spencerian educational principles further in a great school for girls, which is to give the growing generation both physical and moral strength. In his descriptions of this school's leading flapper types, "The General Staff," Björnson has produced some of his best work as a narrator.

Both these works aroused resentment and derision from the radical youth of Christiania, the "Chris-

tiania Bôheme." In his lecture, "Monogamy and Polygamy," which Björnson delivered everywhere in the three Scandinavian countries, he made a violent attack upon the sexual anarchy of the literary Left, and in the great moral conflict which developed both Brandes and Strindberg were among his opponents. In these years he was compelled to fight on two fronts—both against radicalism and against conservatism.

A sprightly intermezzo in the strife of the day is the lively comedy, *Love and Geography* (1885), whose chief character, the intolerable egoist with a mission, Professor Tygesen, is a witty self-caricature. In 1889 a highly productive decade was concluded with Björnson's second great novel, *In God's Way*. In this work the author contrasts the Christian and the evolutionary views of life in the persons of the pastor and the physician, and the book shows how the pastor, who is by nature inclined to be censorious and self-righteous, lives to see that life is stronger than belief, and that "where good men walk, there are the ways of God." The book is scarcely so alive as *The Heritage of the Kurts,* but it is more compactly composed, and it is surer in its taste.

After this book came a long pause. In the years that followed Björnson wrote only a few prose tales, the most important of which are *Mother's Hands* and *Absalom's Hair*. In 1895 a new major work appeared, the second part of *Beyond Human Power*. It deals with the social problem of the relations between employers and workers, and with the destructive doctrine that might is right, which drives both sides beyond the limits of sound moderation.

Between the socialistic workers and the representative of the Nietzschean master morality, both pictured with great impartiality, Björnson has placed the most dangerous type of his time, the anarchist, the fanatic who expresses his idealism by throwing dynamite. The play contains impressive and moving scenes of great typical value: the dismal hell of the workers, the meeting between the factory owner and his employees, the insolent celebration of the employers in the illuminated castle which is blown to pieces. But artistically considered the work is not to be compared with the first part of *Beyond Human Power*. The last act in particular, which attempts to picture the birth of new ideals after the Ragnarok of the class war, is both obscure and weak.

The next play, the political tragedy *Paul Lange and Tora Parsberg* (1898), is a genuine work of art and one of the author's most beautiful and most important works. The chief character is drawn from Björnson's friend, Minister of State Ole Richter, who was driven to death by suspicions directed against him for political purposes. In the person of Paul Lange's friend, Arne Kraft, the representative of mistaken idealism, Björnson has done penance for his own relation to Richter and for his co-responsibility for the latter's fate. The play pictures with great power the professional politicians' hatred for everything that is independent, fine, and just, the merciless man-hunt which employs all possible means to accomplish its purpose. Paul Lange must succumb in this unequal battle; his beloved Tora Parsberg, who is the most mature and soulful woman character that Björnson has drawn, seeks in vain to hold

him up by means of her love. In the end he shoots himself.

After *Paul Lange* it is ebb tide with the artistry of Björnson, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1903. His last plays, *Laboremus* (1901), *At Storhove* (1902), *The Land of Day* (*Daglannet,* 1904), *When the New Wine Blooms* (1909) and the story *Mary* (1906) concern themselves with the new youth that has grown up in Norway, and usually picture the relations between fathers and sons, the eternal problem of all times. The most interesting of these is *When the New Wine Blooms,* which with its youthful cheer and its bright outlook on life forms a peculiar contrast to Ibsen's sad farewell to *his* art, *When We Dead Awaken.*

Björnson is, first and foremost, a preacher. There is a spiritual relationship between him and Victor Hugo, whom he loved and admired. His art is always at the service of an idea; the theory of "art for art's sake" is for him an abomination. He is an ethicist, never an esthetician. His aim is, in part, to teach mankind that what is human is most important; to teach man to wish only that which is possible and to desire only that which is attainable. In part it is his aim to proclaim, with the optimist's unshakable faith in evolution, that progress is always upward, that the future will inevitably bring victory for what is good. He was an evolutionist and a democrat. The aristocratic individualism of his time did not shake his faith in fellowship, in the joy of sympathy, in the necessity of "lifting together."

His art always shows a bias, but it is never a mere

bias; for it is always in harmony with the living reality, and it is never merely a vehicle for dead theories. As an artist he is less sure than Ibsen; especially is his taste less reliable, but his feeling for psychological detail is greater, and his human portraiture is more lifelike than that of his great rival.

The third great Norwegian, JONAS LIE (1833–1908), created the modern novel in Norway, as Ibsen and Björnson had created the modern drama. Lie was of about the same age as Ibsen and Björnson, but he matured slowly, and it was rather late in life when he found his calling as a writer. He did not make his début until the two dramatists had left their romantic period behind them, and his chief works were written when he was about fifty.

Jonas Lie's father was a juridical official and was transferred, when the boy was five years of age, to Tromsö, the chief city of Nordland, Norway's northernmost province. The eight years that Jonas passed there made a deep impression on him. It is the Land of the Midnight Sun, beyond the Arctic Circle, Norway's fairyland. Everything seems fantastically to take on mightier dimensions than elsewhere; the dividing line between real and unreal disappears under the impression made by the imposing scenery and the extraordinary people here at the boundaries of Finmarken and Lapland. The boy lived a robust outdoor life, but he was an indifferent student; things did not go much better at the school in Bergen, to which he was sent after an unsuccessful attempt to become a naval cadet. In order to pass the University entrance examinations

he was compelled to go to Christiania, to Heltberg's "Student Factory," the same school from which both Ibsen and Björnson entered the University.

Lie studied law and, after passing his examination for the bar, took up the practice of law in the town of Kongsvinger. In 1860 he married his clever and admirable cousin, Thomasine Lie, who proved a good helpmeet both in his writing and in his life. In Kongsvinger the gifted lawyer soon became a central figure in the vast timber speculations in which that part of the country was then engrossed. He made a great deal of money, but the whole affair soon proved to be a wild delusion which ended in frightful collapse and economic disaster. At the age of 35 Lie was compelled to return to the Capital with his wife and children—and with a debt of a million kroner.

While in Kongsvinger Lie had published a small volume of poems (1866), chiefly occasional verses, and had also written for the newspapers various political articles which showed originality in conception and style. He now determined to live by his pen in earnest. During the first lean years he was obliged to keep the wolf from the door by newspaper work and tutoring, but in 1870 Björnson procured for him the acceptance of his story, *The Visionary* (*Den Fremsynte*), by the Gyldendal publishing house in Copenhagen which had already brought out the works of Björnson and Ibsen. The book appeared shortly before Christmas and at once attracted a great deal of attention. Lie had, at one stroke, become a famous man.

The Visionary is based on his childhood impres-

sions of Nordland. The whole enchanted world of the North, described with romantic rapture, is the background for a beautiful and touching story of the love of two very young persons. The theme was happily chosen, and the execution was brilliant. It was a new land that had been taken into possession. The local color was superbly done; his interpretation, interwoven as it was with strange legends, had about it an occult mysticism, and there was something so inexplicably fascinating about the chief character, that the book was soon one of the most widely read in Norway.

In recognition of this book Lie was awarded a stipend for a journey to Nordland, and he repaid the obligation with a new Nordland novel, *The Barque Future* (*Tremasteren Fremtiden*, 1872), which, however, did not measure up to the book with which he made his début. Much more important is the next novel, *The Pilot and His Wife* (1874). The scene is laid in the southern Norwegian shipping town of Arendal, and the book is filled with briskly told experiences of seamen: long voyages, shipwrecks, desertions, shore leave adventures, and the like. But back of the somewhat obvious romanticism of the sea is a modern story of married life. Pilot Salve Kristiansen and his splendid wife, Elisabeth, are not happy. He is obsessed by the belief that she does not find him genteel enough but is always dreaming of the naval lieutenant whom she was once on the point of preferring to him. At last, after ten years of married life, she brings matters to a climax and demands a straightforward understanding. The reconciliation between them frees him

from his morbid suspicions and restores trust and love to his soul. In this book, Lie, like Björnson, demands complete understanding, complete sincerity, and complete devotion as conditions for a happy married life.

The next few years brought disappointments. Lie attempted, without great success, two novels of Christiania, *Thomas Ross* (1878) and *Adam Schrader* (1879), and an artist drama, *Grabow's Cat* (1880). In these books he maintained a cautious, conservative standpoint toward the new movements which, with Björnson and Ibsen as banner bearers, were taking the country by storm. But the critics were willing to accord him recognition only as the author of Nordland stories and sea tales, and influenced by them he wrote two more sea stories, both of which were highly successful: *Rutland* (1880), a narrative about an old trading vessel and its crew, and *Go Ahead!* (*Gaa paa!*, 1882).

Go Ahead! is one of Lie's best books, and it has an additional interest because one notes in it the swing in the direction of the new ideas, those very ideas toward which he had previously taken a critical attitude. The story describes a family threatened with decay and the fight to put it on its feet again. But the picture of the curiously isolated region at the head of Aafjord, where everything is in stagnation, everything degenerates, human beings as well as dumb beasts, and where regeneration, fresh air, and a wider outlook are essential to life, becomes, whether or not the author has so intended it, a symbol of the confined, stagnant intellectual life of the North, which was threatened with intellectual death

unless the doors should be opened to Europe.

Lie's next two works, the short story *Butcher-Tobias* (1882) and the novel *The Life Prisoner* (1883), showed clearly that he had now found his place in the ranks of the realists. There was bitter realism in the portrayal of the poor, bungling Butcher-Tobias, and in spite of its subdued calmness there was a violent attack on society's crying injustice in *The Life Prisoner* with its story of how a criminal is made.

But in this, as in everything, Lie preserved his independence. While Zola was the dangerous model for many Northern naturalistic writers, Lie was more like Daudet; he had the latter's humor and sympathy, and his style, like Daudet's, is terse and alive—in contrast to Zola's ponderous, solemn diffuseness. Lie's novels touch upon a number of the great problems of the time, and in their melancholy earnestness they are no less poignant than the great tragedies of Björnson and Ibsen. But he never preaches. The portrayal of men and women is always his chief interest. He "brings human destinies into the debate," applies great problems to small persons. His scene, therefore, is usually the home, not society as a whole. His tones are subdued, and it is precisely for this reason that his descriptions are so effective. Back of all his earnestness lies a fundamental faith in life, which gives his art its peculiar warmth. While the doctrinaire naturalistic writer is often a cold-blooded experimenter, one always finds in Lie sympathy with the characters whose destinies he unfolds for us. Arne Garborg has rightly called him "the understanding writer."

In the same year as *The Life Prisoner*—1883—came *The Family at Gilje*, Lie's most classic work. The main point in this book is not the delicately melancholy story, but the setting. The story is placed in the 1840's in the Captain's house at Gilje, nine days' journey by sleigh from the Capital, and the Biedermeyer milieu is drawn with unique keenness and authenticity. The home of a Government official in its everyday aspect and in holiday garb stands vividly before us. There is not a false note, not a spurious type.

In contrast to the calm monumentality of this book is *A Maelstrom* (1884), with its furious tempo. Here we have a large number of characters, and the action, which deals with the struggle for existence of an old mercantile house ending in the inevitable crisis and total ruin, goes forward with feverish haste.

In *The Commodore's Daughters* (1886) the woman question, which is touched upon in *The Family at Gilje*, is taken up quite undogmatically. The scene—the little naval town with its circles of officers and their families—is taken from Frederiksvœrn, where Lie had attended the Naval Cadet School. The Commodore's daughters, Cecilie and Marta, are sacrificed, each in her own way, to convention and to society's conception of morality. The lives of these two fresh young girls are ruined; the proud ballroom queen, Cecilie, becomes an embittered old maid, while the warm-hearted Marta is humiliated and crushed and is compelled to deny her own child.

The fourth important novel, *A Marriage* (*Et

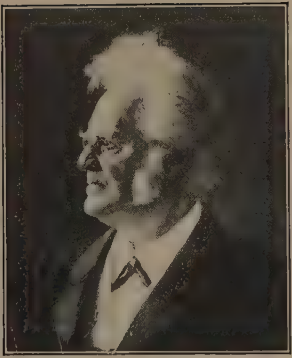
Samliv, 1886), deals with marriage. In this book, perhaps more than in any of his others, one has the opportunity to study how the portrayal of men and women is always Lie's chief interest, while any purpose he may have with his writing comes second. The chief characters, Jakob and Alette, are a lawyer and his wife. The story continues from their honeymoon to their silver wedding, and it shows how these two, gradually and without any break taking place between them, draw apart from each other. He is wholly absorbed in his work, she in the care of her children. The gray dreariness of everyday life and the trifles that fill their days make them strangers to each other, and it is not until their silver wedding day that they talk things out together and come to understand that they "have been on the point of perishing side by side."

Of less importance are the next two novels, *Maisa Jons* (1888) and *Evil Powers* (1890). But in the 90's a new element appears in Lie's writing. The two small volumes of tales, *Trolls* (1891–92), lie wholly outside the customary domain of Realism. They go back rather to his starting point, *The Visionary,* but his art is more mature and greater than before. In these volumes we find, in part, straight tales told in the manner of the people and done with a sure touch; in part, we find powerful and exalted nature fantasies; and, in part, profound parables and witty satires plainly addressed to modern society. "That there are trolls in human beings," writes Lie, "is known to every one who has an eye for that sort of thing."

The thought of the demoniac subsoil of the soul,

the mysterious subconsciousness that lies back of reason, dominates several of Lie's books from these years and gives them a mystic, uncanny character. This is particularly true of the charming tale, *Dyre Rein* (1896). The scene—from the beginning of the nineteenth century—is delicately sketched with a sure hand, but the central character, an outlaw child of nature, a lonely soul in torment, who can be redeemed only through love, belongs plainly in the world of the trolls. In *When the Sun Goes Down* (1895), there is the same demoniac effect in the evil wife, who in the end is struck down like a wild beast. In the remarkable novel *Niobe* (1893) Lie, in his portrayal of the relations between parents and children, has his say to the youth of the 90's, which did not meet with his approval. The final catastrophe in this book, where the mother, in desperation, blows up her three eldest worthless children and herself, is cruder and more violent than is usual with this author.

Faste Forland (1899) contains some autobiographical material as to how Lie, after his financial disaster, became an author. There remains to be mentioned one excellent novel, *When the Iron Curtain Falls* (1901). The book pictures an American-bound steamer with its varied social strata from the first cabin down to the steerage, making a miniature world, an image of the greater world. Into the care-free gayety of this little world there suddenly comes a rumor that the ship is doomed, that an anarchistic plot is to send it to the bottom of the sea! With death near at hand, all masks are dropped; men and women show their true natures, and this



Björnstjerne Björnson

Jonas Lie

Henrik Pontoppidan

Herman Bang

brings about a complete re-appraisal of all values on board. But the author permits the danger to pass over. The "plot" is merely the fiction of a diseased mind. The little world again falls into its accustomed order—but not entirely. The glow of the great experience still lies over everything. Here and there things are put in their proper places; that which injustice has kept in the shadow is brought into the light, or that which has shone with spurious splendor is dimmed.

Jonas Lie wrote both plays, among which *Lindelin* may be mentioned, and poems, but only as a novelist is he important. His art is the art of remembrance; it is worth noting that all his modern novels have been written in foreign lands far from Norway, while he lived in Paris and Dresden and other places on the Continent. But few writers have struck the note of the homeland so surely as he. His imagination has a decided visual character. He is a master at hitting off just those little significant traits and mannerisms that make his figures live, and at the same time he knows how to create an outer frame of reality about his characters with his masterly backgrounds. Of the figures he has created, the women are particularly remarkable, and his personal characterization is supported throughout by the consistently individual dialogue. His style developed continuously along original lines; the development may be measured by comparing the quiet, straightforward narrative tone of his first books with the refined impressionism of the later novels as, for example, *Niobe*.

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Brandes, Jacobsen, and Drachmann, Björnson, Ib-

sen, and Lie mark the birth of the new era in Northern literature. They differ from each other in their aims as in the means by which they attain those aims, but they stand, each in his own domain, for the Modern Awakening. Their contributions constitute a revival in the realms of criticism, the drama, the novel, and the art of poetry. They opened from within the door outward to Europe. They prepared the way for new thoughts and for new art.

NATURALISM

II

NATURALISM

THE generation dating from about 1880 differed in essential points from that which went before, whose thoughts it inherited. Victorious Naturalism now reigned, but the uplift that had come with the great battles of ideas was gone. Literature with a purpose was not so dominant as before. On the contrary, authors made it a point of honor to reproduce reality as completely as possible and as impartially as possible. The ethical emotion of the battle for new ideals was succeeded by a purely artistic feeling for that which was "well done," and while the men of the 70's sought to foment battles of opinions, to start discussions, and to recruit proselytes, this generation contented itself with scandalizing the citizenry. Characteristic of this period is the supremacy of the novel in all three countries. The drama is thrust into the background, and only in Sweden does it find a new and individual development. The lyric has no really distinguished representative. Naturalism culminates in the years between 1880 and 1890, but even before this period one notes the countercurrents that are to succeed it.

I: DENMARK

In Denmark the most important representative of Naturalism is HENRIK PONTOPPIDAN (born in

1857). He belongs to an old and distinguished clerical family and is himself the son of a clergyman. His first ambition was to be an engineer, and in 1877 he passed the first half of his examination for an engineering degree. Then he gave up his studies, was for a time teacher in a Folk High School, and married a peasant's daughter. His first book appeared in 1881, and since that time he has devoted himself entirely to writing. In 1917 he, together with Karl Gjellerup, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In *The Church Boat,* which is the principal story in his first book, *Clipped Wings,* we find already the ground theme of Pontoppidan's writings: revolt against the parsonage. At the same time the story shows Naturalism applied to the interpretation of the peasant. Pontoppidan's nearest Danish predecessors in this field were, first of all, the men who produced the so-called school-teacher literature, worthy but not particularly talented authors of the school-teacher class whose well-meant but rather shallow stories of peasant life are, without exception, mildly idealized. The youngest and most important of these writers was Zakarias Nielson (1844–1922). Another predecessor of Pontoppidan in this field was the novelist Sophus Schandorph (1836–1901), who stood close to Brandes and through the latter's recommendation attained a certain position as a modern realist, but whose peasant tales, in spite of all their coarse vulgarity, lacked, in the same degree as did those of the school teachers, a feeling for reality and a deeper understanding of the theme. In Pontoppidan's work all idealization is thrown aside. His art is naturalistic. It presents with stern

and sober earnestness the poverty and misery of the very poor—the reverse side of the idyl without any mitigating adornment.

In the years that followed, Pontoppidan probed still deeper in his interpretation of peasant life. To these years belong *The Congregation at Sandinge* (1883), a satiric attack on the Grundtvigian Folk High School culture, and the two caustic collections of tales, *Village Sketches* (1883) and *From the Huts* (1887). In the latter collection one finds perfect little masterpieces; tragedies of everyday life which, with their unending, hopeless melancholy, move one quite as profoundly as do the struggles with destiny of many a great imaginary hero.

The third collection of stories, *Clouds* (1890), which is one of Pontoppidan's best books, has a wider scope than the earlier ones. It presents pictures from country and town in the years after 1885, known as the "provisional period," when the domestic political situation in Denmark was very deplorable. The country was divided because of the strife between the party of the Left, which was in the majority in the Folketing, or second chamber of the Rigsdag, and the Conservative Government. The latter, supported by the Landsting, or first chamber, met the Folketing's refusal to enact financial legislation in the form proposed by the Government by dissolving the Rigsdag and by issuing provisional laws, whereupon the appropriations were made. The country was on the verge of civil war, but the Government was not to be frightened. Pontoppidan's clever stories are characterized by both sympathy and indignation, but first and foremost

by a healthy and vigorous irony which thrusts with equal force at both parties to the strife.

All these earlier works may be regarded as preliminary studies for Pontoppidan's first great cycle of novels, *The Promised Land,* which is, artistically, his most finished work. It is divided into three parts: *Mould* (1891), *The Promised Land* (1892), and *The Day of Judgement* (1895). Outwardly this trilogy is a satirical picture of the provisional period with its cultural, ecclesiastical, and political struggles. At the same time it is a uniquely lifelike description of a part of North Sealand, with excellent types of peasants, both small crofters and big freeholders, as well as of persons of quality outside the peasant estate. Finally—and this is the innermost essence of the book—the chief character, the clergyman Emanuel Hansted, is a penetrating soul study of a religious visionary and his tragedy. In this respect *The Promised Land* is a companion piece to Björnson's *Beyond Human Power.*

Along with that trend in Pontoppidan's writing which seeks its theme in the life of the peasants, one finds during these years another. It appears in a series of "Small Novels," whose action, in most cases, takes place outside of peasant circles. These novels are not all equally good; most of them, so far as their plots are concerned, are even quite novelistic in the old-fashioned sense of the term, but a common characteristic of them all is the explicit irony which may be perceived back of the sober, dispassionate narrative form. Certain of them belong distinctly to the class of novels with a purpose, as for example *Mimosa* (1886), a clever thrust at

Björnson in the great controversy on sex morality in the 80's, and especially *Night Watch* (1894), which is the Naturalist's trenchant protest against the Symbolism and Neo-Romanticism of the 90's and, at the same time, a most vigorous expression of the rebellious and anti-social elements in Pontoppidan's nature. A continuation of the tendency in the "Small Novels" is Pontoppidan's next great work, the long novel, *Lucky Per,* published in eight volumes, 1898–1904, and the final edition in three volumes in 1907.

The title is ironic. The idea of *Lucky Per* is anticipated in the tale, *Eagle's Flight,* in the notable collection of wise and witty *Chronicles,* which Pontoppidan brought out in 1890. It is expressed in the words: "It is no use being hatched from the egg of an eagle if one is brought up in a poultry yard." Lucky Per is Per Sidenius, a minister's son, who, in spite of his rebellion against his childhood home and family, fails to realize his great engineering plans and his superman ideal because his Sidenius nature, his racial inheritance, always cripples his powers of action at the decisive moment. Since his inner doubts make it impossible for him to find peace among his own people, whose outlook on life has become quite foreign to him, he is forced to content himself, homeless as he is and without roots in any soil, with finding his happiness in having belonged to "an age which has called to his individuality." The book presents vivid scenes of Copenhagen at the turn of the century. Several of the minor characters are downright portraits, easily recognized; thus, in the Jewish Dr. Nathan, Pontoppidan

has cleverly portrayed Georg Brandes. In contrast to the heavy, old-Lutheran world of the Sidenius family is the completely worldly Jewish money aristocracy, represented by Per's fiancée, Jakobe, and her home; the delineation of these is among the best features of the book.

With *Lucky Per* Pontoppidan reaches his culmination. His later works, some of which were written contemporaneously with the long novel, include a few unimportant plays, a new series of "Small Novels" of which *Mayor Hoeck and His Wife* (1905) and *Hans Kvast and Melusine* (1907) are the most interesting, and finally his third long work, *The Kingdom of the Dead* (1912–15), embracing the novels *Torben and Jytte, Storeholt, Publicans and Sinners, Enslev's Death,* and *Favsingholm.*

In 1901 the victory of the party of the Left had finally brought about a change in the political system of Denmark, and the rule of the minority was succeeded by a parliamentary government. In *The Kingdom of the Dead* Pontoppidan sought to present a complete picture of Denmark after this change, but his fundamental view of the matter is very gloomy. The author sees the new development as a retreat from the ideals of the 80's, and disappointment has colored his picture with gray tones; bitterly grieved, he turns away from reality and seeks consolation in Utopia. Some details, especially those concerning politics, are excellent, but as a whole this cycle of stories—due largely to the diffusiveness of the narrative—does not attain the artistic eminence of *The Promised Land* and *Lucky*

Per. The same is true of the author's last work, *Man's Will* (1927), a novel of the time, and a keen appraisal of official Denmark during the years of the war.

Henrik Pontoppidan is a realist true to his convictions, a merciless opponent of all that is visionary and of all obscurantism, but he directs his keen criticism also against both Naturalism and Individualism, although he has an intellectual kinship with both. In his later works one notes a steady growth of his conviction as to the intellectual bankruptcy of the "Modern Awakening." This finds its most notable expression in his poem on the occasion of the seventieth birthday of Georg Brandes (1912). In his skepticism and his mordant irony he is reminiscent of Ibsen, whom he surpasses in clarity of thought, but with Pontoppidan criticism is often accompanied by intense sympathy and by a desire to understand those whose modes of thought differ from his own. His particular field is the realistic picture of his own times—occasionally with a somewhat indiscreet use of a living model. No other of the newer Danish authors has been able to present such a complete picture of his time, its intellectual movements and its human types. In this respect Pontoppidan's works form a modern companion piece to the comedies of Holberg.

In decided contrast to the markedly virile art of Henrik Pontoppidan is the almost feminine sensitivity of his contemporary, HERMAN BANG (1857–1912). The latter is a typical representative of the second generation of the Naturalistic school. He be-

longs among the "tired men," the decadents; Bang's first novel bears the significant title *Generations without Hope.* Enthusiasm for new ideas and faith in the ultimate triumph of progress is succeeded by dull resignation to life and a mingling of contempt and pity toward men.

Herman Bang was a minister's son from Als. He belonged to an old and cultured family which now showed unmistakable signs of degeneration; his father died insane. Bang entered the University in 1875, and his mental development was then far beyond his years. He was to have studied law, but his heart was set on the theater, and when he was unsuccessful in an attempt to become an actor he turned to journalism instead. He quickly obtained admittance to the columns of leading Copenhagen newspapers, and at the age of twenty-two he published a collection of essays, *Realism and Realists* (1879), which was soon followed by a new collection, *Critical Studies and Sketches,* and a volume of journalistic causeries, *At Home and Abroad.* The young author appeared in these books as the inspired prophet of French Naturalism; his readable articles deal with such novelists as Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, and Feuillet, and with such dramatists as the younger Dumas, and present at the same time characterizations of their Northern disciples. Among the latter was the fine novelist VILHELM TOPSÖE (1840–1881), Bang's real teacher. Politically Topsöe was an opponent of the men of the Modern Awakening, but in his considerable and interesting literary production he came near to Realism both in his choice of subjects and in his psy-

chology. It is characteristic of Bang, however, that Realism is for him not an outlook on life but an artistic method. For him, as for Lie, it is not the cause or the problem that matters, but life itself.

Bang made his début as a creative writer with some unimportant drawing-room pieces and with the pretentious but not particularly interesting collection of short stories, *Sad Melodies*. His first really important work is the long novel, *Generations without Hope* (1880). It has value as a document typical of his time and as a key to the author's intellectual development, for the entire story of William Hög's youth, his stage dreams and the fiasco of his trial performance at the theater, closely covers Bang's own period of storm and stress. But not only that; the book is also proof of a new and remarkable artistic talent. The scenes are often uncannily lifelike—the mother's death and the father's insanity, for example—and in spite of the wretchedness of the chief character we are fascinated by his fate.

The next novel, *Phædra* (1883), may perhaps best be described as a study taking the French Naturalists and J. P. Jacobsen as models. There is more individuality in *Eccentric Novelettes* (1885). The first of these is the story of a waiter; the next is a thrilling tale of circus life; and the last and most important, *Charlot Dupont,* is a heart-rending story about the sad tragedy of a poor, musical "child wonder." In the following years Bang is wholly himself; the books appearing in the years from 1886 to 1890 constitute the culmination of his authorship.

First we have two important novels, *Stucco* and *Tine*. Along with the influence of Zola one notes, in the style, that of Lie, to whom Bang pays homage in the introduction to his collection of novelettes, *Under the Yoke*. *Stucco* (1887) pictures the critical transition period in the history of Copenhagen, the development from the constricted little town behind its ramparts to the growing metropolis. The picture of the 80's, the frenzied building craze with its outward splendor and its inner sham—expressed in the symbolic title—is exceedingly vivid. *Tine* (1889) is based on the author's recollections of his childhood home at Als. Because of its plot, dealing with the defeat of 1864, the novel is a Danish companion piece to Zola's *La débâcle*. Rightly or wrongly, Bang deduced the hopeless position of Denmark and the intellectual breakdown of his own generation from the defeat at Dybböl. A classic example of his art is the chapter entitled "Dannevirke Night," which depicts the shattering of illusions.

Bang's art has found its most complete expression in two collections of novelettes. In the first, *Quiet Lives* (1886) is found his masterpiece, the story *By the Wayside*. Bang has never reached greater heights of human portraiture than in this simple little tale of everyday life. It tells of little Mrs. Kathinka Bai, the station master's wife, and of her dashing husband. She is one of the quiet ones of the earth, one of the delicate and defenseless persons whom Bang loves, and whose fate calls forth his deepest sympathy. The rakish station master, on the other hand, is a living expression of the author's contempt for mankind; he is ordinary

through and through, good-natured and inoffensive by nature, but at bottom coarse in a masculine way, an empty and self-satisfied egoist.

Under the general title *Under the Yoke* (1890) are gathered three novelettes about the stepchildren of life and the tragi-comedies—or tragedies—of everyday existence. There is a tragi-comedy in *A Beautiful Day*, in the glaring contrast between the meager, commonplace life of the teacher, Etvös, and the great experience which turns everything topsy-turvy for him and his family when the famous pianiste, Madame Simonin, becomes a guest in his modest home. But there is tragedy in *Miss Caja*, describing the boarding-house spinster, whose joyless life with its eternal anxieties and eternal humiliations has made her hard and bitter. And there is tragedy—infinitely sad and heart-rending—in *Irene Holm*, the story of a miserably poor, middle-aged dancer, who is compelled to travel from district to district in order to support herself by giving dancing lessons, and whose life's illusion—that she is a great artist—is brutally crushed by the coarse laughter of the village people.

By the Wayside, *A Beautiful Day*, and *Irene Holm* form the peak of Bang's authorship. After these there is a steady decline. The virtuosity of the form of his writing debases or weakens its content; Bang has developed mannerisms. This is evident already in *Ida Brandt* (*Ludvigsbakke*, 1896), in which a comely and wholesome nurse falls into the hands of a swaggering ne'er-do-well of the nobility, a type similar to that of the station master in *By the Wayside*. The plot is a bit thin, but the milieu

of the hospital is presented with brilliant artistry.

To the succeeding years belong the two quiet and slightly sentimental books of recollections, *The White House* and *The Gray House* (1898 and 1901); the first is a poetic fantasy with his childhood home as a frame for a medallion portrait of his mother; the second deals with the home of his grandfather and with the masterful and slightly theatrical figure of the latter.

We need not concern ourselves here with several less important collections of novelettes nor with the short novel, *Summer Joys* (1903), scenes from a provincial hotel at the height of the season. It is a bit of stylistic virtuosity, and it does not pretend to be anything else.

The two voluminous novels, *Mikaël* and *Denied a Country* (*De uden Fædreland*), are more pretentious. *Mikaël* (1904), which is staged in Paris, is the glorification of genius in the person of the painter, Claude Zoret. There is considerable sham profundity and attitudinized superciliousness in the portrayal of this "Master," but there are also some splendidly conceived situations and some wonderfully stirring crowd scenes. *Denied a Country,* too, is not free from mannerism nor from unbecoming self-glorification and unpalatable sentimentality. But it is, nevertheless, one of Bang's most powerfully conceived and most boldly executed books. The chief character, the homeless violin virtuoso Jóan, is, back of all the empty phrases, an affecting confession of the author's tragic feeling of loneliness and his spiritual homelessness. The action, after a brief prologue setting forth the most necessary premises,

takes place in a single afternoon, and it is a most consistent realization of Bang's technical ideas. Everything happens, so to speak, before our very eyes without the guiding intervention of the author. The novel is a complete genre picture; it is all situation, movement, direct speech.

Bang begins as a genuine Naturalist. He has the Naturalist's craving for merciless truth, and his outlook on life is dark and tragic—the decadent's feeling of despairing weakness when confronted by the brutal, overmastering power of life. But he points to something beyond Naturalism by his sympathy for those to whom life is unkind.

In technique and style there is a distinct difference between his first books such as *Generations without Hope,* for example, which resemble Zola in their objective narrative manner, and the later ones where Lie is the model, but where literary Impressionism, corresponding to the contemporary tendency in painting, is carried much further. Bang's true domain is the situation. That expresses his literary Credo: that art shall reproduce reality as completely as possible—and only that. He wishes everything to be understood directly from that which takes place; he seeks to restrict the author's ancient privilege of omniscience and of the right to enlighten and guide the reader. In this he carries on a Sisyphus struggle, particularly with the problem of how to bring into the novel the narration of events before the opening of the story. The more the narrator keeps himself in the background and lets his characters speak, the more closely the novel approaches to the drama, and *Denied a Country* has the effect of one enormous

scene in a play. But his ambition seems to go even further. While the proper domain of the novel is the picturing of successive (*nacheinander*) developments, Bang seeks to attain the impossible—to reproduce the simultaneous (*nebeneinander*) as it impresses itself upon real life. He is fond of scenes in which there are many persons, where fragments of unrelated conversations constantly cross each other. His aim is the complete illusion of reality. While the spirit of the old-time epic is repose, Bang's ideal is movement—ceaseless, feverish movement. Bang's attempt consciously to evade some of the fundamental laws of the epic is in many ways ingenious, but it cannot be denied that his struggle against insurmountable difficulties time after time ends in over-elaboration and mannerism.

Typical of the 80's was PETER NANSEN (1861–1918), journalist, and for many years director of the great publishing house of Gyldendal. His bold and exquisite journalistic style influenced a school of writers to follow him, and at the same time he developed a prolific literary production which not only found admirers in Denmark but also gave him a great name in the German book market. His stories, *Julie's Diary* (1893), *Maria* (1894), *God's Peace* (1895), and others, are most explicit evidence of the passionless weariness that followed the lust of battle which prevailed in the 70's. The precarious erotic themes are treated with a mingling of foppish cynicism, carefully calculated to scandalize the community, and blasé sentimentality. The influence of French models is noted particularly in the style. After

an interval of nearly twenty years Nansen resumed his activity as an author in 1915 with a dismal and unsavory novel, *The Brothers Menthe,* in which his earlier desire to please, even though he shocked, his public, was succeeded by an infinite contempt for humanity.

Related to the novels of Nansen are the Copenhagen comedies which succeeded the problem play and the drama of discussion common in the 70's. The leading writers of the comedies are EDVARD BRANDES (born 1847), a younger brother of Georg Brandes and a prominent politician and noted dramaturgist; OTTO BENZON (1856–1927), author of *A Scandal* (1884), and GUSTAV ESMANN (1860–1904), who wrote *The Beloved Family* (1892). These plays, with their lively humor and brisk dialogue, give a sprightly picture of middle-class circles in Copenhagen. EINAR CHRISTIANSEN (born 1861) has higher ambitions. He has not only written fine drawing-room pieces, but he has tried his hand at fairy tale plays in the spirit of Neo-Romanticism, and big social dramas. He is a man of fine culture, but his art lacks the originality and temperament that might give it lasting significance.

Pontoppidan and Bang, with Nansen, represent, each in his own way, the complete development of Naturalism in Danish literature. The revolt against this movement is raised by a third minister's son, born the same year as Bang and Pontoppidan, KARL GJELLERUP (1857–1919).

Gjellerup, like Pontoppidan, belonged to a cultured clerical family, and, true to its traditions, he

took up the study of theology. But even from his school-days his interest lay in quite another direction, that of German Classicism, particularly Schiller, and modern English lyric poetry. As a student he became an enthusiastic follower of Georg Brandes, and when, in 1878, he took his final examination in theology, the Biblical criticism of the Tübingen school and the evolutionary teachings of Darwin and Spencer had long since made him a decided freethinker.

From the examination table he went home to his foster-father's parsonage and wrote in five weeks his first book, *An Idealist* (1878), which immediately placed him in the extreme left wing of the radical movement. *An Idealist* is no masterpiece; it is immature in thought and badly written. And yet we find in it the whole of the future Gjellerup, all the way from his enthusiasm for music and his deep love for the German spirit, through his bookishness and the learning which always mars his style, to the flaming and even fanatic idealism which gives soul to his presentation. At the time the book appeared it was effective because of its keen, polemical statement of his attitude toward theology, and this continued with increasing violence in the next books, *Young Denmark* (1879) and *Antigonos* (1880), culminating in *The Disciple of the Teutons* (1882), a cultural novel which closely mirrors the author's own development. During the previous year he had sought in a collection of poems, *Red Thorn*, to apply the theories of Naturalism to the lyric. The collection is fiery red both in its positive poems—the monstrous *Tubal-Cain*, for example—and in its

negative ones, consisting of a series of coarse, rather than witty, attacks upon literary reaction; and it culminates in the long cycle of poems under the general title, *Ave,* which pays homage to Georg Brandes in expressions of almost religious enthusiasm, calling him "Our Knight of the Holy Ghost, our St. George!"

But it was soon evident that this radicalism really was foreign to Gjellerup's nature and was to be explained essentially by his hatred of theology. A long journey abroad, which took him first, naturally enough, to Jena and Weimar, but which continued thence to Greece, made it clear to him that he belonged with the Humanism of Goethe and Schiller at the beginning of the century and not with the Naturalism of the year 1870. Light is cast on the turning point in Gjellerup's life by the travel books, *A Classic Month* (1884) and *The Travel Year* (1885). The latter contains a frank account of his decisive break with Georg Brandes. It was, in no slight degree, the position of Brandes in the great controversy on sex morality that roused Gjellerup's deeply ethical nature.

Gjellerup now sought new paths for his art. He wished to combine his modern, scientific outlook on life with Classical Humanism. His aim was to "revive the grand style."

The next few years brought a series of daring experiments in drama. Northern themes were treated in *Brynhild* (1884), *Hagbard and Signe* (1888) and *King Hjarne the Bard* (1893), and a Greek theme in *Tamyris* (1887). The time of the Revolution supplied the material for *St. Just* (1886), and the

Saxon rococo for the comedy, *The Wedding Gift* (1888). And finally, he sought in three plays of his own time, *Herman Vandel* (1891), *Wuthhorn* (1893), and *His Excellency* (1895), to create modern dramas of ideas in the spirit of the young Schiller. But it is only occasionaly that his high-strung ideal strivings have been given an artistically fortunate expression; generally speaking, the author has found his themes too much for him. This is particularly true of *Tamyris*, a grandly conceived work in the Greek style which—manifestly influenced by the scenes of antiquity in the second part of *Faust*—aims to picture the eternal struggle between Idealism and Realism together with the author's education and self-development in the school of ideas. The only one of these plays which has lasting value is the tragedy *Brynhild*. The legend of the Volsungs, a favorite theme of both German and Northern writers, is here treated in the manner of Greek tragedy with choruses and messages. The work has true antique bigness; the characterization is beautiful and powerful, and the treatment of the theme bears witness to the author's profound and austere earnestness. Besides the influence of Schiller, one sees in this tragedy that of Swinburne and Wagner; Gjellerup regarded the latter's works as the starting point of the modern drama, and in 1890 he published an appreciative and valuable book about Wagner.

Gjellerup's best work during this period, however, is not in his plays but in his prose tales. He had already begun during the time of his travels abroad with the two delicately quiet novelettes, *Romulus*

(1883) and *G-Major*. The novel *Minna* (1889) was a real triumph. It is a charming and finely conceived presentation of a young German girl's tragic love story, and it is at the same time a declaration of the author's love for the German spirit. In contrast to the flat-bottomed culture of Copenhagen, the author—in decided opposition to the prevailing hate for all that was German—sets up his Minna as a representative of German feeling and German spirit, the spirit of Goethe and Schiller, of Beethoven and Wagner. Another very important novel is *The Mill* (1896). With its broad, solidly constructed plot, it is an attempt to create a modern Epos, in which not even the mythological and symbolic elements are lacking. The action takes place in a superbly pictured mill on the Danish island of Falster; it describes the various phases of a crime—a murder committed in a blind frenzy of jealousy—the punishment of the murderer, his remorse, and finally the finding of peace for his soul. There is something of Zola in the book and something of Dostoievski, but, with its doctrine of renunciation and atonement, it points to the world of thought which was to dominate Gjellerup's writing during his last period: the teachings of Buddhism.

The way to India led for Gjellerup through the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the music of Wagner. In indignant protest against Nietzsche and his doctrine of the superman, he sets up the ascetic; the renouncer of the world against the conqueror of the world, and the demand for liberation from self against the demand for self-assertion. The works produced during the last twenty years of his life are

notable for their purity and beauty of thought, while the ability to give form to his ideas fails more and more. The most beautiful of these works are the two Indian legendary dramas, *The Sacrificial Fire* (1903) and *The Wife of the Perfect One* (1907). The novels—from *The Pilgrim Kamanita* (1906) to *The Golden Bough* (1917)—are all very diffuse and impress one as being old-fashioned in their mingling of profundity with the out and out traditional tricks of the novelist. None of them can measure up to *Minna* or *The Mill.*

From 1889 Gjellerup had resided in Germany, and most of his works were published simultaneously in German and Danish. In 1917, as has already been mentioned, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature together with Pontoppidan.

Gjellerup's art will always be of interest to the literary historian, but his books are scarcely destined for a long life; they bear too evident traces of the disproportion between his desire and his ability. His intellectual energy is as great as that of his prototype, Schiller, to whom he bore also a physical resemblance, and his authorship is a daring absorption in the fundamental problems of life, a many-sided discussion between various views of life. But it lacks relation to life. It is for this reason that his style is so uncertain and his pathos often so spurious, and it is therefore that his description of men and women seems so artificial, and his poetry (*The Book of My Love,* 1889) so cold. Only in *Brynhild, Minna,* and *The Mill* do we perceive life itself—the rest is literature.

2: NORWAY

In Norway Naturalism assumed a much more powerful and more violent character than in Denmark. Here literature with a purpose was still at its height; Realism became far more coarse, brutal, and unadorned. Everywhere were problems loaded with explosives; everywhere literature became a power for division and dissension. The party of the Left, which had just, in 1884, forced through the victory of parliamentarianism, split on the question of an author's stipend for Alexander Kielland. At about the same time the public mind was aroused by the great moral battle which raged between Björnson and the radical "Christiania Bohême," supported by Garborg. The leaders of this radical group were the anarchist, HANS JÆGER, whose book, *From the Christiania Bohême* (1885), which was immediately suppressed by the police, gave the movement its name, and the gifted painter, CHRISTIAN KROGH, author of the novel, *Albertine* (1886), which was likewise suppressed. Finally, we have at this time the beginning of the decisive struggle between the almost purely Danish official language and the *Landsmaal*—that ingenious endeavor to create out of the various dialects a national Norwegian literary language—a struggle which was to divide Norway's writers into two camps.

As in Denmark, the novel took first place. Between Lie and the writers of the 80's comes KRISTIAN ELSTER (1841–1881). His most important novel, *Dangerous People* (1881), shows the contrast

between modern progressive ideas and the reactionary narrow-mindedness of a little provincial town in Norway. Elster was of a deeply pessimistic nature, influenced in his art by Turgenev. He died poor before he could make a definite place for himself, and he was completely overshadowed by the most exquisite prose writer of the time: Alexander Kielland.

ALEXANDER KIELLAND (1849–1906) was the buoyant and clever man of the world among the heavy and solemn Norwegians; at once an aristocrat and a man of pleasure, and still, at the same time, the sincerely democratic spokesman of the lower classes. He was born in Stavanger as the son of an old patrician merchant family of high standing, and no other Norwegian author is so intimately identified with his native town. Stavanger was the scene of nearly all his books. He grew up with a deep hatred for the Latin school and the preparation for confirmation; his novel, *Poison* (1883), attacks both violently, the first because it fills the children with dead and unsound knowledge, and the second because it makes them unthinking believers in authority. Kielland studied law, was admitted to the bar, and set up as a lawyer in his native town. Thereupon he lived ten years as proprietor of a tile manufactory just outside of Stavanger. In these years, which served as a preparation for his authorship, he matured intellectually; to this contributed also a sojourn in Denmark, where he was deeply impressed by the personality of Georg Brandes, and where he formed friendships with Edvard Brandes

and J. P. Jacobsen. When in 1879 he made his début as an author he dazzled everybody by his artistic maturity and his sure touch. For fully ten years he was a blazing star in the firmament of Norwegian literature, until he abruptly gave up his writing when he felt that he was no longer able to measure up to his own standard.

Kielland was by heartfelt conviction a writer with a purpose; his aim was to attack, not to describe. Indignation was the source of his inspiration. Back of the sure craftsmanship and the graceful style of the man of the world is hidden an "honest adherent of utilitarian literature."

Kielland's very first book, the exquisite *Novelettes* (1879), immediately aroused the enthusiasm of the public. The sting was not yet felt; his weapon was the slender rapier, not the heavy two-handed sword. Still greater was the enthusiasm over his next book, the novel *Garman & Worsë* (1880). The book, which is based in part on memories of the author's own family, gives an excellent picture, with stately and amusing types, of a Stavanger merchant house. At the same time, because of its sharply underscored contrast between the living conditions of the employers and the workers, it is an eloquent demonstration of the social order's unequal distribution of the good things of life. This was the first modern Norwegian novel; Lie's and Björnson's realistic novels of their own time did not appear until later.

A still finer work is *Skipper Worsë* (1882), which narrates the previous history of the house of Garman & Worsë. It is the best of Kielland's longer works, and it is the one which is least aggressive in

tone. With a mingling of sympathy and irony Kielland describes the sturdy, middle-aged sea-dog and his love for the comely Sara Torvestad, who is forced by her mother to accept him, although she loves another; he tells how the skipper, through his love for Sara, becomes associated with "the holy ones," the Haugeans, and how marriage completely tames him. Kielland still has a great deal of sympathy for this West-Norwegian pietism, because it is a movement of the people; the ministers of the Established Church, on the other hand, are always the objects of his special hatred.

But these two purely objective novels are exceptions. In each of his other works Kielland aims to reach some definite goal, to attack some definite fault or abuse.

Working People (1881) is a violent and greatly exaggerated satire on the wastefulness of the official class, and the blundering routine of government offices. *Else, a Christmas Story* (1881), holds up before the safely situated citizens the Christmas of poverty, misery, and crime. The title character is a poor girl of the people who is seduced by a rich man and sinks to the dregs of society; the story is alloyed with a goodly portion of sentimentality. *Poison* attacks the school, as has already been mentioned, and its sequel, *Fortuna* (1884), flays the conscienceless business morality of the time. His books become steadily more and more aggressive in their polemic tendencies.

Resentment and opposition to Kielland were growing even within the ranks of the party of the Left. In 1884 the Storting refused him an author's

stipend, and as reason for the refusal characterized his work as "a literary activity which, at least in part, is held to be in opposition to the moral and religious concepts prevailing within the nation." Among Kielland's bitterest enemies was the Stavanger clergyman Lars Oftedal; the battle for supremacy in the town was between these two. Oftedal's portrait is drawn in the novel *Snow* (1886), which was aimed at religious intolerance. A direct pamphlet against the same person is *Midsummer Festival* (*Sankt Hans Fest,* 1887), in which the clergyman, under the name of Morten Bagstræver (Reactionary), followed by an obedient wake of hypocrites and fanatics, smothers with his clammy hand all joy of life in the little town.

Kielland has tried his hand also at playwrighting. His most successful plays were *Betty's Guardian* (1887), which satirizes various contemporary manifestations, such as the Christiania Bohême, the women's rights women, the political climbers, etc.; and the powerful and effective drama, *The Professor* (1888).

But toward the end of the 80's Kielland felt his inclination to write diminishing. He turned to practical activities, became first an editor in Stavanger, later mayor of the city, and ended as magistrate in Romsdalen. His last creative literary work, the witty and caustic novel, *Jacob* (1891), disposes of the sharks of democracy, the plebeian struggler types. His description of a small-town parvenu, the peasant youth Törres Snörtevold, whose ideal is the patriarch Jacob, and who with voracious greediness and brutal disregard of others fights his way up to

become the most powerful man in the town, is a living testimony of his disappointment in the new democratic social order which he had formerly believed in so faithfully.

Kielland himself looked upon his books as arguments in the strife of the day, and had no expectation of long life for them. Their pronounced bias, made evident by the author's use of the antithesis as his favorite figure of speech, naturally weakens the purely artistic effect of his books for the reader of today. Kielland's style aimed always at merciless objectivity, but the presentation itself was always arranged to serve some purpose. Yet timebound as his subjects are, Kielland's witty and graceful style lifts itself above them; the linguistic virtuosity, which marked even his very first book, has not lost its attraction with the passing of the years.

In the writings of Alexander Kielland the bitterness of Naturalism was still hidden behind the easy elegance of the style. In the work of Amalie Skram (1847–1905) it is stripped naked. She is the North's most consistent exponent of Naturalism, and she is the most complete pessimist among the writers of the period.

Amalie Skram was a merchant's daughter from Bergen. When she was barely eighteen the young girl, whose home had recently been overtaken by a financial catastrophe, was married to a man much older than herself, a sea captain named Müller, whom she accompanied on his voyages. She saw and experienced much, particularly of the coarse and

brutal phases of life. In 1878 the marriage was dissolved. She then tried her hand at journalism, and in 1882 she met the Danish writer, Erik Skram, whose wife she became. This marriage, too, was dissolved after twelve years, but these were the years of her authorship. After her divorce she was compelled to seek a cure for a nervous breakdown in several hospitals for the insane; her experiences there she has described in the novels, *Professor Hieronymus* (1895) and its companion work, *At St. Jörgen's* (1895), whose nerve-wracking scenes give it value as a pathologic document. Her last years in Copenhagen were deeply melancholy. She died there of a heart attack while working on her novel *Human Beings*.

Amalie Skram's aim was to reproduce reality unabridged and in its most merciless form, to lay bare the hopeless woe and misery of life. Her very first work, the sketch *Mrs. Höier's Tenants*, dealing with a miserably poor family which is thrown out on the street, is coal-black in its pessimism. Her first novel, *Constance Ring* (1885), with its attack on marriage and especially on the unfaithfulness of the husband and his lack of consideration, was her contribution to the great controversy on sex morality. In it she sketches in sharp, glaring outlines a type which recurs in several of her books—the woman who cannot love and who therefore wearies of life. We meet her again in the heroine of *Fru Inez* (1891), who always inspires love but is unable to reciprocate it, and who finally, disgusted with life, kills herself. We meet her also in the important novel, *Betrayed* (1892), which goes far deeper in its delineation of

men and women than does the rather tiresome *Constance Ring*. The chief character, Mrs. Ory, reminds one somewhat of Hedda Gabler; the idea of the book is the impassable abyss, the racial difference between man and woman.

Upon this lack of any possibility of understanding between the sexes is based the interesting play, *Agnete* (1893). Quiet and intimate in style are the short story, *Summer* (1899), which bears the impress of her marital shipwreck, and the novel *Christmas Holiday* (1900), whose chief male character is created after the memory of her fine and noble brother, Johan Ludvig.

Amalie Skram's greatest achievement, however, is the series of novels bearing the general title *The People of Hellemyr* and consisting of *Siur Gabriel* (1887), *Two Friends* (1887), *S. G. Myre* (1890) and *Offspring* (1890.) It is a family history as Naturalism loves to tell it, as we find it in Zola, for example, a demonstration of that school's theory of heredity in its most pessimistic form. The action takes place in Bergen, and the series, in so far, forms a companion piece to the Stavanger novels of Kielland. Not the least part of their interest lies in the shifting pictures of the enterprising commercial city through half a century. But the keynote here, as in all the works of Amalie Skram, is gloomy and sad.

The first little book, *Siur Gabriel*, forms an introduction to the work; it gives us a foundation for the understanding of its plot. It tells of a poor Stril family (the Strils are the fisher-folk in the vicinity of Bergen) and its hopeless struggle for an existence which has nothing to offer but adversity, want, and

sorrow. The wife is a drunkard. The husband, the industrious and serious-minded Siur Gabriel, finally yields to the same temptation after the death of his youngest son, Little Gabriel, who had been the only bright spot in his somber existence. We are told that "from that day both the husband and the wife at Hellemyr drank."

The chief character in the other three novels of this series is Siur Gabriel's grandson, Sivert Jensen. In the excellent sea tale, *Two Friends,* which in its descriptions of sea folk and seamanship approaches considerably nearer to reality than Jonas Lie, we meet him as a brisk, clever boy with a firm determination to rise in the world. But his racial heritage makes itself known in an ominous manner; he is guilty of petty thievery, is given to lying, and is not to be depended upon.

The events narrated in *S. G. Myre* take place about 1860 and picture Sivert's efforts to raise himself to the middle class from the working class to which he belongs by birth. The description of the death and burial of the grandfather, Siur Gabriel, is brutal and repulsive. After many tribulations Sivert is presently successful in reaching his goal; he becomes the merchant S. G. Myre, but it is only by marrying the mistress of the Consul and establishing himself with the latter's money.

In *Offspring,* Amalie Skram's chief work, Sivert's home is pictured. His son, Severin, is a refined edition of his father. He is a promising young man, but he, too, lies and steals, and in the end he commits suicide. The daughter, Fia, is seduced by a rather decent lieutenant and marries a worthless and brutal

man. Sivert's wife is cold as ice by nature, evil and hard-hearted, embittered toward life—which has not fulfilled her ambitious expectations. Sivert himself sinks lower and lower, forges a check, and dies in prison. As a contrast to the sinister home of the Myres with all its brutality, the author has painted in bright colors the home of Severin's friend, Henrik Smith; and Henrik's aunt, the fine and animated Milla Munthe, who is Amalie Skram's ideal woman, impresses one as a positive figure in the otherwise negative pessimism. The book contains a throng of persons clearly and sharply drawn; it is the most vivid and the most humanly sympathetic of her novels.

Amalie Skram is surely one of the most important woman writers of the North, but her talent has something morbid about it. She is bolder in her choice of subjects and in her descriptions than most of her contemporaries, but her imagination is attracted chiefly by the hideous and ugly aspects of life; she exaggerates because of her pessimism. Her art is utterly lacking in humor. This pessimism has its deepest foundation in an unsatisfied need to love; the experiences of her own life, which held little happiness, have determined her entire outlook on existence, particularly her views of the relations between men and women. Her strength is her forthright honesty. Her observations always bear the stamp of experience and of having been seen with her own eyes. For this reason her style is more vividly effective than that of Kielland, for example. The interplay between her remorseless realism and her deep need for tenderness in the midst of her despair gives her

otherwise masculine writing the true womanly note that is always found in it.

In the works of the Norwegian dramatist, GUNNAR HEIBERG, we have a parallel to Georg Brandes's Nietzsche stage of aristocratic radicalism. His implications are those of Naturalism, but he turns definitely away from the prevailing literature with a purpose, especially as it was represented by Björnson in the 80's, in which moral teaching was the main thing, while consideration of esthetic values was set aside. Against writing as a means to an end he espouses "art for art's sake," and against democratic utilitarianism he puts uncompromising individualism. As a writer he stands at the transition point between two periods.

Gunnar Heiberg (1857–1929), belonged to a well known Norwegian-Danish family which has had important representatives in both kingdoms. He made his début in 1878 with a philosophical reflective poem, *The Genesis of Man,* which showed the influence of Byron, and with *Soirée dansante.* In 1884 came his first play, *Aunt Ulrikke.* After this he was for several years theater director and stage manager in Bergen. For a number of years he lived mostly abroad, and contributed some excellent Paris correspondence to the daily paper, *Verdens Gang.* Selections from this correspondence are found in the collection of *Paris Letters* (1900); among his other brilliant collections of essays may be mentioned *Seen and Heard* (1917) and *Norwegian Theater* (1920).

His most important works are unquestionably his

plays. Their technique is quite different from that of Ibsen; there is often a series of brilliant single scenes, while the totality is weaker; his dialogue flashes with spirit and wit and rises at times to the height of lofty prose lyricism.

Heiberg's dramatic work falls into two sharply separated groups. The first consists of his flippant social satires, almost Aristophanic in the irreverence to which nothing is holy, and in the coarse-grained satire which cynically offers up victims for ridicule. A long series of theater scandals is therefore inextricably tied up with the history of his plays.

An Aristophanic comedy, admirably constructed, is *Aunt Ulrikke* (1884), one of his best pieces. Its action takes place at the close of the 70's, the time of the first Socialist meetings in Christiania, and it presents a gallery of lifelike and amusing types from the time of the Modern Awakening. There is the pillar of society, the professor of Philology, who is ready to sacrifice all ideal considerations for the prospect of becoming a cabinet minister; there is the radical phrase-maker and climber; there is the young girl, who believes enthusiastically in the ultimate triumph of progress and the ideals; and, finally, there is the chief personage (drawn from a living model), the emancipated champion of the cause of women, the terror of her family, with her extreme views, her fantastic appearance, and her big heart.

King Midas (1890) made a great sensation as an aftermath to the controversy on sex morality. The author is in sympathy with the Christiania Bohême, and directs a violent attack against Björnson. The latter is caricatured in the chief character, Ramseth,

whose self-satisfied idealism merely cloaks his struggle for power and his egoistic calculation. At the same time, the piece is an energetic protest against the entire moralizing literature of the 80's. *The Grand Prize* (1895) is a comedy of the lottery, a fantasy dealing with a proletarian leader who suddenly becomes rich. *The Council of the People* (1897) is thoroughly disdainful of Norwegian democracy. In *Harald Svan's Mother* (1899) Heiberg attacks the press, and in *Love Your Neighbor,* the spokesmen for altruism. Coarsest and most virulent of all, however, are his last two comedies. *I Will Defend My Country* (1912) deals with the dissolution of the Union in 1905, which, because of its compromise with Sweden, had been a bitter disappointment to Heiberg. In this play his scorn is directed against the admired and idolized Minister of State, Michelsen. *The Parade Bed* (1913) deals with the insignificant sons of a great man, who cynically live high on their father's name and use even his deathbed as an asset in their negotiations with an enterprising film photographer. The satire is plainly coined out of the circumstances attending the death and burial of Björnson, but in its irreverence it far exceeds the limits of the permissible.

While Heiberg's skepticism is the dominating element throughout in this group of his plays, his finer feelings find their best expression in his two chief works, *The Balcony* (1894) and *The Tragedy of Love* (1904).

The Balcony, with its three short acts, is a song of praise to woman as a creature of sex and to love as a force of nature which defies all morality and

breaks down all barriers. It is rigid in its composition, with a few plastic types of character; it is refined in its apparent simplicity, and it is written in a magnificent, weighty Renaissance style. The piece aroused both admiration and violent opposition. The ablest attack upon its spirit was that of the literary historian and philosopher, Chr. Collin, in his *Art and Morality* (1894). Taking the view that sound art should play a part in the battle of life, he protested against the Nietzschean individualism and against the amorality of the theory of "art for art's sake."

Even more important is *The Tragedy of Love.* While *The Balcony* is an arrogant hymn in praise of love, this work, which with its thoughtful and beautiful lines reminds one of a Platonic dialogue, is subdued in tone and deeply tragic in its conception. A great love demands life as a sacrifice. For Karen, the heroine of the play, love is everything; aside from that nothing exists for her. When she becomes aware that her husband is gradually slipping away from her, she is overcome by terror; she struggles in vain to hold him fast; she fails—and takes her own life.

The most interesting figure of this period is ARNE GARBORG (1851–1924). Much of his importance lies in the linguistic domain. It was through him that the Landsmaal movement first made real headway; from now on there were two literary languages in the country. The battle between them, which still continues, has left deep traces in the recent political and literary history of Norway.

The creator of the Landsmaal was the gifted, peasant-born philologist, IVAR AASEN (1813–1896). During the more than four hundred years of Norway's union with Denmark, Danish had become the official language. Norwegian existed only in dissimilar peasant dialects. The written language differed but slightly from the Danish, and down to 1850 the literature of Norway was essentially Danish. Aasen understood that an independent Norwegian language was of vital importance to an independent Norwegian culture, and for this reason he formed from the dialects of Western Norway a standard language. His *Dictionary* was published in 1850. Beside Aasen, the most important champion of the Landsmaal during its earliest years was the poet A. O. VINJE (1818–1870), publisher of the weekly newspaper, *The Dalesman.* As the great national idea of the Landsmaal won its way to the front, politics began to enter into the movement. The party of the Left, which was chiefly recruited from the peasants of Western Norway, was sympathetic toward it. The turning point in the history of the movement was the year 1877, when Arne Garborg began the publication of *Fedraheimen* (The Home of Our Fathers), the first daily newspaper printed in the Landsmaal.

Arne Garborg was the son of a peasant from Jæderen, southwest of Stavanger, Norway's only bit of sandy coast. His father, who was for a time a school teacher, was an extreme pietist, and the home was gloomy and dismal. The son was graduated from a seminary for teachers, and became a teacher in a people's school, but his aim was to pass

the entrance examination for the University, and in 1875 he reached his goal in spite of his poverty and his hard struggle for a livelihood. Two years previously he had already attracted attention by an article about Ibsen's *Emperor and Galilean*. He became connected with the Conservative *Aftenposten*, in which he opposed Brandes and Björnson, writing from the viewpoint of Christianity. Politically he adhered to the party of the Left, in whose interest he founded *Fedraheimen*. To the same year belongs his first eloquent contribution to the cause of the Landsmaal which was followed later by many others. Nearly all his creative literary works are written in the Landsmaal, and into it, in the last years of his life, he translated *The Odyssey* (1918).

It soon began to be noted in *Fedraheimen* that the editor's views on life were undergoing a decisive change. During these years Garborg studied Brandes and Kierkegaard, Taine and Comte, Renan and Darwin; as early as 1878 there appeared in his paper the novelette *A Freethinker*, the entire trend of which is evidence of the change. During the ten years that followed, Garborg was one of Norway's leaders in Naturalism.

Garborg's first important work was the novel *Peasant Students* (1883). This book takes high rank as a picture of the time. The description of Daniel Braut's childhood and early youth is in part a bit of autobiography, but Garborg's aim in the novel is to show the cultural danger that ensues when the son of a peasant, motivated by stupid vanity, forsakes his natural surroundings and his natural work to embark on an official career, which

leads to laziness and bureaucratic routine. The descriptions of student life in Christiania during the 70's are masterly. Daniel is poor and in the beginning extremely radical, but he is a weak character, and hunger finally drives him into the arms of theology and reaction. Outwardly he is on the right side of life when the book ends; but his treason against his country origin and his peasant mode of thought has crushed his personality.

Garborg was now drawn into the great controversy on sex morality. In the novelette *Youth*, in *Tales and Legends* (1885), he made sport of Björnson and *A Gauntlet*. When the Christiania Bohême took up the fight, and the books of Jæger and Krogh were confiscated by the police, he placed himself on their side with the novel *Menfolk* (1888), which he challenged the Minister of Justice to confiscate along with the others. The book was not confiscated, but it cost Garborg his position as State Auditor. It presents an unusually dark and repulsive picture of the futile, swinish existence of the academic and artistic proletariat and its coarse erotic excesses. More subdued in tone, but quite as depressing is *At Mother's* (1890), a broad and rather long drawn out story, which pictures the young girl of the 80's and her joyless existence.

One notes in this book the beginning of a weariness with Naturalism, and this is perceived also in the strictly personal *Kolbotn Letters* (1890). A distinct farewell to Naturalism is the next novel, *Tired Men* (1891), which was a great success. It denotes a turn of the tide in literature and is a noteworthy parallel of the contemporary novels of Huys-

mans. In diary form he describes the decadent. The writer is tired of life, which gives him stones for bread; he substantiates the bankruptcy of science in the face of the fundamental problems of existence, and he is drawn toward spiritism and mysticism, to end at last in a religiosity tinged with Catholicism.

Heretofore Garborg's books had pictured conditions in Christiania; now he turns to his home district, Jæderen, and his feeling for nature, which had scarcely found expression in the earlier novels, gives to his subsequent works their high horizon and their remarkable beauty. At the same time the religious question comes to the fore, as it does everywhere in the *fin-de-siècle* literature. Its gloomy side is treated in the novel *Peace* (1892), in which Garborg, in picturing Enok Haave and his dismal West-Norwegian pietism, has had in mind his own father. The yearning after peace dominates Enok Haave's life; he sinks deeper and deeper into his brooding over religion, until his sense of the disproportion between the stern demands of religion and the weakness of human nature drives him to despair and death. In his next book Garborg shows that he has attained a positive standpoint, that of an undogmatic Christianity based on the teachings of Christ, but opposed to the teachings of the Church regarding Christ. His play *The Teacher* (1896) deals with Enok Haave's son Paulus, a man who desires to live as Christ taught, and who for that very reason becomes a danger to the community. Another work expressing Garborg's positive views on this subject is the remarkable monologue, *The Lost Father* (1898), whose chief character is Paulus

Haave's brother Gunnar. With its longing after God, who is lost to the man of today, it has the effect of a personal confession. Gunnar, a logician and a skeptic like Garborg himself, is unable to trace his way back to the faith of his childhood, but he finds peace in his brother's teaching, which points to the commandment that is to Garborg the heart of Christianity: Love thy neighbor as thyself! Finally Garborg has given his neo-Rationalism theological form in *Jesus Messiah* (1906) and *The Son Comes Home* (1908).

While the books about Enok Haave and his sons were inspired by the religious unrest of the 90's, the Neo-Romanticism which was at that time winning the victory over Naturalism found full expression in the two poem cycles, *The Hill Innocent* (*Haugtussa,* 1895) and *In Helheim* (1901), named after Helheim, in Norse mythology, the abode of the dead. The central character in *The Hill Innocent* is the visionary peasant girl, Veslemöy (Little maid). The chief interest, however, lies not in the slender plot but in the wonderful descriptions of Jæderen, its scenery and the life of its people, which have made this collection one of the chief works of poetry in the Landsmaal, and in his imaginative use of popular superstition which peoples all nature with grotesque and alluring, uncanny and dangerous beings. On Skaru-Kula Veslemöy lives through a veritable Witches' Sabbath, and Garborg has handled this incident with the same poetic freedom as is seen in its prototype, the *Walpurgisnacht* in Goethe's *Faust,* making it a satire on conditions and opinions that were distasteful to him; its connection

with the rest of the cycle is but slight. The supernatural element in *The Hill Innocent* has supplied the theme and the starting point for its continuation, *In Helheim,* in which Veslemöy in a dream is conducted through the realm of the dead. The prototypes for this work are Dante's *Inferno* and the late medieval Norwegian poem, *The Dream Chant* (*Draumkvæe*). The retributory punishments are pictured with uncannily keen imagination, but the work as a whole impresses one as being tediously diffuse; the most beautiful part is the ending, where the souls ascend to the homes of the blest.

Garborg's last major book, *Knudahei Letters* (1904), is a series of clever causeries on the rootlessness of Norwegian culture, together with a series of beautifully told memories of childhood.

A lively susceptibility to all impulses and an understanding of the existing problems of his time—these are the chief impressions gained from Garborg's writing. Inflexible adherence to dogmatic views, of whatever sort they may be, is foreign to him; he has apparently in the course of time taken standpoints diametrically opposed to each other, and yet he has always remained true to his own nature. There dwells in him a skeptic and a logician, a keen intelligence with a zeal for clarity. But he has, too, his religious inheritance from his father, a subsoil of mysticism, which is not satisfied with logic's apparent explanation of the Universe. These religious feelings found their most positive expression in his writings at about the turn of the century; later he seems to have ended in a sort of agnosticism—a recognition of the complete lack of knowledge about

those things concerning which one is most desirous of being enlightened. What is important, however, is not his own final standpoint, but the fact that his writing prepared the way for, in itself reflects, the transition from Naturalism to Symbolism and Neo-Romanticism.

None of the other Landsmaal writers of this period can measure up to Garborg. One might mention JENS TVEDT (born 1857), author of short stories and novels; the lyric poet PER SIVLE (1857–1904); and Garborg's friend and biographer, the clergyman, IVAR MORTENSON (born 1857), whose chief work is the saga drama, *The Outlaw* (*Varg i veum*, 1901).

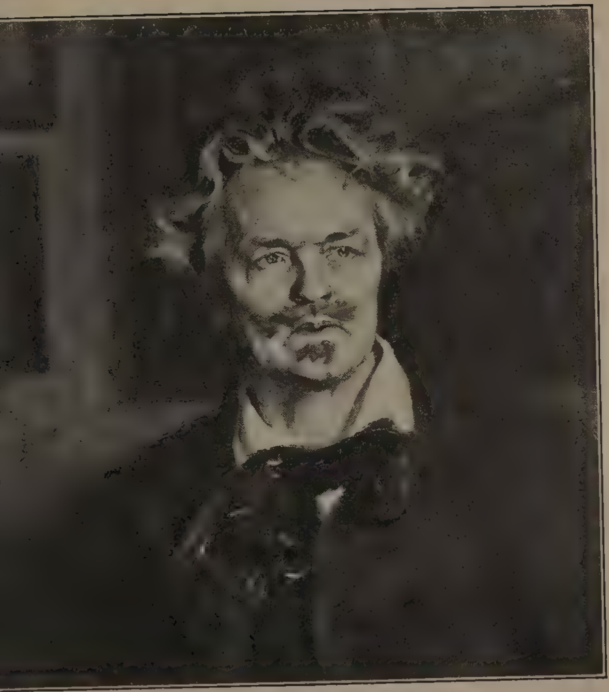
3: SWEDEN

In Sweden Naturalism first emerged about the year 1880. The dividing point is fixed by August Strindberg's novel *The Red Room* (1879). For while the new ideas were triumphing in Denmark and Norway, Sweden was still dominated by idealistic writing, whose foremost representative was the noble humanist VIKTOR RYDBERG (1828–1895). In addition to historical and theological writings, Rydberg produced excellent historical novels dealing with the struggle between humanistic religious liberalism and dogmatic orthodoxy, such as *The Last Athenian* (1859) and *The Armorer* (1891), and beautiful reflective poems in the style of Goethe, besides a fine translation of *Faust* (1876). Among the lyric poets may be mentioned CARL SNOILSKY (1841–1903), called "Sweden's last classicist,"

whose artistry—somewhat cold but highly intellectual and wonderfully beautiful in form—is spiritually akin to the poetry of *Les Parnassiens* in France. One might mention also CARL DAVID AF WIRSÉN (1842–1912), a post-Romanticist of excellent taste, but of somewhat slender performance. As a critic and as Secretary of the Swedish Academy which awards the Nobel Prize in Literature, he was the most determined opponent of Naturalism.

About the year 1880 influences from without began to create a stir in the intellectual life of Sweden. It was the moral earnestness of Ibsen and Björnson and the bold paradoxes and dazzling eloquence of Georg Brandes that awoke the urge of revolt, the urge for a revision of the reigning inherited views. As in Denmark, it was the study of the English philosophers Thomas Buckle, Darwin, and Spencer, and of French esthetics that inspired the demand for truth in science and art. Creative writers descended from their elevated realm of ideas to the burning questions of the day; first and foremost the emancipation of women; then the social problem, the attacks on the Church, etc. Literature took sides—often to the detriment of its artistic effect.

The greatest figure and the leading man in Swedish Naturalism is AUGUST STRINDBERG (1849–1912), Sweden's only important dramatist, and probably the most noteworthy figure in Northern literature of the last fifty years. While the Realism of the 80's, so far as its other representatives are concerned, is a dead and abandoned phase, the



August Strindberg
From a Painting by Richard Bergh

works of Strindberg are still alive and stimulating. He is, to an even greater degree than Georg Brandes, a sign of contradiction. His restless life ran through all phases; in rapid succession he adopted every standpoint; he was a passionate atheist and a simple believer in the Bible, an extreme Socialist and an extreme anti-Socialist, a nature worshipper and an apostle of civilization, a friend of the human race and a woman hater. But the focal point is the personality, the man August Strindberg, unusual both in his great merits and in his disagreeable faults. As in the case of Goethe, his entire literary production must be interpreted as "fragments of a great confession."

August Strindberg was born in Stockholm. His father was a merchant of good family, and his mother, who had originally been a barmaid, was considerably lower in the social scale. Strindberg himself has, in *The Bondwoman's Son* (1886), given a touching, although one-sided, picture of his childhood and early youth. His mother did not understand him, and matters were worse when, after her death, a stepmother came. There were many children in the home, and the income was small; the boy was half starved and was always in fear of his father. Even as a child he was morbidly nervous; he was extremely irritable, and his anger would break out in uncontrollable, hysterical frenzy; at other times, a paralyzing dread would plunge him into complete depression. In 1867 he became a student at the University of Uppsala, where the inflexible University conservatism aroused his inborn urge to opposition. With interruptions, due in part to

money difficulties and in part to his uncertainty as to his vocation, he remained a student until 1872, trying his hand in the meantime as tutor, school teacher, student of telegraphy, journalist, and even making an attempt to become an actor. From these years date his first immature plays, a romantic tragedy *Hermione,* a modern three-act drama, *The Freethinker,* an Icelandic saga play, *The Outlaw,* and others, all awkward and quite impersonal works which, nevertheless, gave constantly increasing testimony of his talent. From 1874 to 1882 he was employed in the Royal Library in Stockholm. In 1877 he married his first wife, the actress Siri von Essen, who was to become a vital influence in his entire life development.

Strindberg won his renown with the novel *The Red Room* (1879), but previously he had already written his first masterpiece, the historical play, *Master Olof* (1872). The chief character of the latter is Sweden's reformer, Magister Olaus Petri, and Strindberg's treatment of the theme is very free and quite unconventional. In the technique and style of the play one sees the influence of Goethe's *Götz,* and in the author's conception of history one traces the negative skepticism of Buckle, but first and foremost it is Strindberg himself who is to be found in the play. Olof is the flaming apostle of truth, but in the end he fails to remain true to his convictions; he is upright and ambitious, but yet weak. There is revolutionary feeling in Olof and especially in the Anabaptist and Communist master printer, Gert, but Strindberg does not take sides with his hero; his opponents are also right from their point of

view. Therefore his radical social criticism results in an anti-democratic skepticism which finds that everybody is right and nobody is right, because the one and unalterable truth, to which everyone appeals, does not exist.

We meet the same skeptical and relativistic view of life in his Uppsala sketches, which show the reverse side of the hollow student idealism. During these years Strindberg was studying Darwin, Brandes, and the pessimistic philosophy of E. Hartmann. While his earlier books had gone unnoticed, his great success came with his novel of artist life, *The Red Room.* It was realism of a sort yet unknown, a work of art based on real life, to which Swedish literature could show no equal. Its importance lies not so much in its often sharp and biting social criticism or in the portrayal of men and women, as in the brilliant scenes from Stockholm's artistic and literary circles, from the press, from industry and commerce, from politics and administrative officialdom, all so vividly reproduced that the reader seems almost to live through the motley scenes. The tone of the book was not gloomy and bitter, as were later realistic works; it was antagonism in a merry and humorous vein. The prototype was not Zola, but Dickens and the American humorists, especially Mark Twain. From this time on Strindberg was famous.

But in the years that followed, the duality in his nature soon showed itself. After *The Red Room* came two romantic dramas of the Middle Ages which were cheerful in character: *The Secret of the Guild* (1880) and *Sir Bengt's Lady* (1882); to-

gether with a quite inoffensive and charming fairy comedy, *Lucky Pehr* (*Lycko-Pers resa,* 1882). But after an attempt to write the history of Sweden, *The Swedish People* (*Svenska folket i hälg och söcken,* 1881), had met with an unfavorable reception, Strindberg replied with *The New Kingdom* (1882), which created a scandal because of its witty but violent and malignant attack on modern Sweden. Out of his historical studies grew the collection of novelettes, *Swedish Events and Adventures* (*Svenska öden och äventyr,* in four volumes, 1882 et seq.), which may be compared to *Master Olof.* In it we find modern thoughts in historic costumes, strong and vivid pictures, whose artistic vigor fully makes up for the occasional lapses from historic accuracy.

In 1883 Strindberg left Sweden. He went to Switzerland, where he associated with Russian revolutionists and felt himself attracted by Socialism. During this year and the following one he published the two collections of poetry, *Poems* and *Somnambulist Nights,* which show his sensitiveness to the attacks on *The New Kingdom,* but which also give evidence of his awakening social consciousness. During the early 80's he developed into an assured democrat, whose ideal was Rousseau. In the spirit of the latter he preached: Back to Nature!—The future of Europe lay with the peasantry. His book, *Odds and Ends* (*Likt och olikt,* 1884) and the novelettes *Utopias in Real Life,* which bear witness to his studies of Saint-Simon, express a positive optimism; he makes his reckoning with the Church, with poetry, and with the natural sciences,

declaring himself a Deist, a pacifist, and an adherent of utilitarian literature. His program was: "The greatest good to the greatest number."

When it came to the woman question, however, the harmony of the picture was destroyed. Originally Strindberg had been well disposed toward this main problem of the 80's. Now he suddenly took up arms against the emancipation of women in book after book which revealed him as the greatest woman hater in the literature of the world. The reason for this lay in his own unhappy marriage, or, to look more deeply, in his own morbid nature, where confusion of ideas and persecution mania now burst into flame. The key to the understanding of his condition is found in *The Confession of a Fool,* written in 1887–88, which makes the most dreadful—and quite unjustified—accusations against his wife. His view of the relationship between man and woman is that it is a battle of the sexes, and his aim is to defend man against the onward march of feminism. He rejects the plea of equality; woman is biologically different from man; her place in life is that of the wife and mother. In a series of stories entitled *Married* (1884) he made mock of the women's rights women and of modern marriage. Strindberg declared himself openly as a defender of the rights of the senses. The story *The Reward of Virtue* is a protest against Björnson's demand for chastity and against the moral ideas set forth in the latter's play, *A Gauntlet.* In the story *A Doll's House* he scoffs at Ibsen's Nora. Yet this volume, which lays stress upon the old-fashioned patriarchal marriage, is quite moderate in tone; its continua-

tion, *Married, II* (1886), is a cynical attack upon woman as the tyrant and remorseless exploiter of man.

It is as though Strindberg's democratic optimism were blown away. Even before his acquaintance with Nietzsche—and later on in sympathy with that philosopher—he attains an aristocratic superman standpoint, repudiating every moral standard and every moral ideal. Life is dominated only by egoism and the instinct of self-preservation; the Deism of Rousseau is succeeded by a cynical atheism. The morals of the beast and the fanatic hatred of women are the driving forces in his plays, which, with their extreme violence, their depths of hate and malevolence, and their protest against all outward dramatic design, impress one as being naturalistic in quite another way than those of Ibsen. They are all fashioned out of the hot embers of his personal experiences: *The Father* (1887), *The Comrades* (originally called *The Marauders,* 1888), *Miss Julia* (with an interesting theoretical introduction, 1888), *Creditors* (1888), *The Link* (1893) and others. The most important are *The Father* and *Miss Julia;* the first deals with a strong man whom his wife in cold blood tortures to death by her hate; the second is a perverse and repulsive demonstration of the beast in mankind. *The Link,* with its harrowing settlement between husband and wife in court, was written under the impression of Strindberg's own painful divorce proceedings in 1891.

A purely artistic work, quite without bias, is the excellent naturalistic novel, *The People at Hemsö* (1887), with its weaker continuation, *Fisherfolk*

(1888). The scene is laid among the fisherfolk on an island in Stockholm's skerries, a region which Strindberg loved. The settings are superbly pictured; there is true epic joy in the great descriptions of nature and of the life of the people, and in spite of the tragic ending, the tone is cheerful throughout.

But aside from these books, the impression made by Strindberg's work during these years is decidedly pathological. With the contempt of the aristocrat he turns against Socialism as a degenerate form of Christianity in *The Battle of Brains* (1888). The superman theory is paradoxically worked out in the story *Chandalah* (1888), in which the man of culture battles with the Gypsy, the representative of the lowest rabble devoid of caste, and the man of culture conquers by force of his intellectual superiority; it is the Aryan conquering the pariah. This theory finds its most energetic expression in the significant novel *By the Open Sea* (1890). Here the superman—an inspector of fisheries—appears in all his greatness; Borg represents absolute individualism, methodical intelligence. In the brilliant theorist's superiority to the crude practicality of the manual laborers we see the triumph of culture over nature, a conception directly opposed to the author's Rousseau ideas of the early 80's. But even in this superman there is weakness concealed back of his strength; terror seizes him at last, and on Christmas Eve he puts out to sea in his motor boat—never to come back.

It was obvious that a definite crisis was approaching. After Strindberg's divorce from his first wife

followed lean and distressful years. His mind became more and more clouded; his friends he repulsed, and a new marriage—with an Austrian lady—lasted only a year. He took up his residence in Paris and turned from creative writing to the natural sciences, to botany, astronomy, and chemistry, but it was mysticism and occultism that attracted him; one of his chief interests was alchemy. At the same time there was a noticeable reawakening of his religious life. The confession books, *Inferno* (1897), continued in *Legends* (1898), tell the strange story of his conversion. In the entries of his journal, which lays bare the author's morbid soul life, the crisis may be followed through all its stages; his fear of attacks upon his life by his enemies calls forth hallucinations and visions; he sees apparitions, signs, and portents. Release comes only when he perceives God's chastening and guiding hand in everything. The study of Swedenborg gave him a firm religious standpoint, at first tending toward Catholicism, but later decidedly Protestant, and to this he held, in spite of occasional attacks of doubt, until his death.

With this conversion the creative writer again awoke in Strindberg, and after his confession books come a series of his most beautiful and most important works. Again it is the drama that claims his interest, and Romanticism of a religious color has now supplanted his former cynical Naturalism. *To Damascus* I–III (1898–1904) is a fantastic retelling of the story of his conversion. This trilogy, played in a dream world where the natural and supernatural are inextricably interwoven, shows life

as a mystery, a school in which sinners through punishment and atonement attain peace and mercy. Strindberg deals with Divine justice also in the two plays published together under the title *In a Higher Court* (1899). The first, *Advent,* is colorful as a book of fairy tales, but conceals the wisdom of a parable; the second, *There are Crimes and Crimes,* one of his clearest and weightiest works, takes place in Parisian artist circles and shows with wonderful inner logic that not only evil deeds, but evil intentions and desires are punished by God. Strindberg's faith in humanity, even in women, has returned; goodness, innocence, and virtue have again become living values for him.

After the religious plays come the long series of historical dramas in which the author returns to the technique of *Master Olof*. In eleven great plays Strindberg has dramatized a part of the history of Sweden from medieval times in *The Saga of the Folkungs* (1899) and *The Earl of Bjälbo* (1909) down to the rococo period in *Gustavus III* (1903), which is full of lively and brilliant details and often of great dramatic effect, in spite of the looseness of the composition. The most important are: *Gustavus Vasa* (1899), the first act of which is a masterpiece of dramatic technique; *Eric XIV* (1899), with a pathologically interesting picture of the mad king; and the great drama of tolerance, *Gustavus Adolphus* (1900), which may be said to be Strindberg's *Nathan der Weise*.

During the last years of Strindberg's life there was a curious revival of the various themes of his writing. The religious mystery drama was con-

tinued in two of his most brilliant and most characteristic works: *Easter* (1901), with its effective mingling of small-town realism and the solemn mood of the Passion; and the bizarre *The Dream Play* which reminds one of the visions seen in the delirium of fever. Purely romantic are the fairy tale plays, *The Crown Bride* (1902), *Swanwhite* (1902), and *The Slippers of Abu Casem* (1908). A play quite in the spirit of the 80's is the dismal drama of marriage called *The Dance of Death* (1901), in which the hatred between man and woman has found expression in what amounts almost to monomania. The same spirit is found to a lesser degree also in the little *"Chamber Plays"* (1907) which were written for Strindberg's own theater, the Intima Teatern in Stockholm. And finally we have certain prose writings dealing with his personal life. His third marriage (with the great actress, Harriet Bosse) had been a failure, and under the influence of his disappointment he wrote *Fairhaven and Foulstrand* (1902), the embittered story, *The Gothic Room;* the scandalous *Black Banners* attacking famous contemporaries; and *A Blue Book* I–III, which is a confused lumber-room for his many-sided knowledge and his peculiar opinions. Before his death he again approached democracy, and he met with appreciation, especially from the Socialists. His drama, *The Great Highway* (1909), is the farewell of this solitary and homeless genius to his art and to the world.

Strindberg's mighty figure stretches far beyond his time and his country, and his world renown is constantly growing. His authorship encompasses all

modes of writing, but he is greatest as a dramatist. In this field lie his most original contributions. His best plays probe the profoundest depths of the soul to give voice to the most secret unconscious thoughts and to call forth the perilous primitive forces which have existed only as potentialities in the mind of man, and of whose terrifying range man is not aware. As is common with people suffering from persecution mania, he was intensely occupied with even the slightest actions of other people; his morbidly sensitive mind perceived and reproduced the entire atmosphere of galling malignity and lurking hate. Cold-blooded sport with emotions, and sudden brutal outbursts of the beast in man are described with that unique, uncanny virtuosity which Strindberg alone possesses. Few have, as he, been able to pierce through the outer varnish of culture down to the nakedly human in its most elementary manifestations.

Compared with Strindberg the other writers of the period seem small indeed. The most interesting are the two women authors, Anne Charlotte Leffler and Victoria Benedictsson, the latter of whom wrote under the pseudonym Ernst Ahlgren.

Most typical of the time, and for that very reason most antiquated in the eyes of the present, is ANNE CHARLOTTE LEFFLER (1849–1892). She represents a judicious and moderate realism. Her horizon is bounded by the limits of respectable society, which she criticizes in the spirit of the time, but in a manner that is restrained and subdued. Her best known works are her stories of the 80's, pub-

lished in five volumes under the characteristic general title *From Life*. They are well written and effective pictures of real life, somewhat dogmatic in tendency. The author's attack is directed against social hypocrisy, against the lies and the prejudices of society, but her chief interest is the woman question; Ibsen's Nora is her great prototype. Direct contributions to the cause of women are the play *True Women* (1883) and the novel *A Summer Saga* (1886); the latter deals with the eternal question of woman's need for independence versus her duties as wife and mother, but the answer is an unsatisfactory compromise. Mrs. Leffler, whose first marriage had been dissolved, married in 1890 an Italian mathematician, the Duke of Cajanello, and the great happiness which filled the later years of her life is reflected in her last books, where purpose gives way to individual psychologic interest, *Womanliness and Eroticism II* (1890) and *That Love!* (1891).

More important is VICTORIA BENEDICTSSON (1850–1888). She was the daughter of a landed proprietor in Scania, and in comparison with Mrs. Leffler she is provincial and bourgeois, but her understanding of social problems is far more profound. Her life was tragic throughout. Poverty, lack of appreciation, and weariness with life finally drove her to her death. She shot herself during a stay in Copenhagen.

The portrayal of real life, the unromantic, everyday existence, is Victoria Benedictsson's chief interest; dogmas and discussions are of secondary importance. It is her delight in real life that is so

attractive in *From Scania* (1884), the cheery and buoyant book with which she made her début. It is a series of sketches of peasant life, quite short, often merely a single situation, but precise in perception, genuine as to local color, and with authentic artistry in their firm, compact presentation. The novel *Money* (1885) follows Björnson and Lie in branding as immoral a marriage in which genuine sympathy is lacking. But the next novel, *Fru Marianne* (1887), flouts the prevailing ideas of the emancipation of women by glorifying marriage and the husband in the name of sober reality. In this novel a lazy and frivolous woman is trained to become a capable person, and while one's sympathy is with the quiet, self-possessed husband who is working toward a definite goal, the author turns the shafts of her irony against the coddled, world-weary Bohemian type of the time. The unkind reception given this book by the author's friends and literary comrades, the Naturalists, was a contributory cause of the wrecking of her life.

A very productive writer and one who was widely read was GUSTAF AF GEIJERSTAM (1858–1909). During his first period he was a representative of realism in its gloomiest and most dismal form; the book with which he made his début bears the significant title, *Bleak Days* (1882). Then came the great period pictures such as the Uppsala novel, *Erik Grane* (1885), and his books portraying the lowly, in which he sought to bring to light the original pagan elements in the people, showing a preference for murder and other crimes. To this cate-

gory belong *Poor People*, I–II (1884–1889), *Niels Tufveson and his Mother* (1902), and others. In his second period, beginning in the middle 90's, he writes of decadent world-weariness as in *Medusa's Head* (1895), and of mysterious and abnormal psychological manifestations, as in *Lost in Life* (1897). In the spirit of the time Geijerstam made copious contributions to the literature of mysticism, and he attained, at any rate in Germany, a certain reputation, even though it was undeserved, for profundity. His most beautiful books, quite intimate and sentimental in character, are his domestic stories, *My Boys* (1896) and *The Book about Little Brother* (1900).

A corresponding movement away from the realism of the 80's may be studied in the works of the novelists, Axel Lundegaard (born 1861) and Tor Hedberg (born 1862). Hedberg's best known works are the psychological novel, *Judas* (1886), and the effective political drama, *Johan Ulfstierna* (1907), based on conditions in Finland.

The two leading representatives of lyric poetry are both from Scania, A. U. Bååth and Ola Hansson. A. U. Bååth (1853–1912) was far from being a great poet; his poems are too often merely rhymed prose. But he made an impression upon his time by the natural honesty and the unpolished boldness of his art. His poetry marks a break with post-Romanticism; he described what he actually saw. His nature pictures from Scania are painstakingly executed, without spurious poetic tinsel, but, it is true, also without particularly deep poetic inspira-

tion. His many social poems etch little genre pictures of the life of students, workers, seamstresses, and emigrants. In their democratic tendency these correspond to a contemporary trend in painting.

A more original poetic talent is that of OLA HANSSON (1860–1925). He was the son of a peasant of Scania, and he made his début in 1884 with a volume of poems after the manner of Bååth, but there was in his descriptions of nature a spiritual quality which Bååth lacked. The next collection, *Notturno* (1885), shows the influence of J. P. Jacobsen and Strindberg; Hansson began as an extreme Naturalist, but his subtle mind could not be content with photographic realism. From 1889 he lived in Germany, and the influence of the German spirit caused him to break with his earlier literary views. In his novelettes, *Sensitiva amorosa,* he is in full opposition to the bourgeois wiseacres and the moralizing rationalism of the 80's; the right of the individual is maintained against the prevailing social views. Nietzsche now became his prophet; the novelettes, *Pariahs* (1890), sharply underline the irrational element in life, and the arrogant prose poems, *Young Ofeg's Ballads* (1892), which express the superman's crushing contempt for the herd, the mob, are plainly inspired by the prophetic style of Zarathustra. Hansson's development reminds one at many points of that of Strindberg. From Nietzsche he was led to Julius Langbehn's *Rembrandt als Erzieher,* which won him over to Pan-Germanism; Langbehn's Germanic dream of a peasant culture liberated his own Scanian peasant nationalism as seen in the collection of essays, *Seher und Deuter* (1893).

From this point the way was open to mysticism. The materialist's conception of the world is attacked in *Materialism in Creative Literature* (1892); it now becomes the aim of poetry to reproduce the transcendental, the metaphysically eternal. Throughout the novels *The Journey Home* (1895) and *The Way to Life* (1896) one feels a presentiment of the issue: Catholicism. During the new century Hansson resumed the writing of lyric poetry; in his last collections, *On the Altars of Home* (1908), he strikes a deeper note, but in the poetry of his native soil there is the same mood and the same artistry as in his first books. Together with Gjellerup, Garborg, and Strindberg, Hansson marks the breaking up of Naturalism and the transition to the Neo-Romanticism of the following decade.

NEO-ROMANTICISM AND SYMBOLISM

III

NEO-ROMANTICISM AND SYMBOLISM

IT was plainly apparent toward the year 1890 that Naturalism was becoming effete and that a new period was to be expected. A sign pointing to the transition was the interest in Nietzsche which Georg Brandes toward the end of the 80's had awakened throughout the North. Within the ranks of the younger generation the onward march against Naturalism was to be noted in Sweden in Verner von Heidenstam's book, *Pilgrimage and Wander-Years* (1888), and in Denmark in the magazine *New Earth,* in which the Norwegian Knut Hamsun published the first epoch-making fragments of his novel, *Hunger.* "Strong personal feeling—that is what is necessary for the creation of modern literature," wrote the leading critic of the younger generation in Denmark, VALDEMAR VEDEL (born 1865), and he added: "Who knows whether a romantic literature, either historic or symbolistic, may not again be possible?"

The years 1890–1900 were to confirm in all three countries the correctness of these words. The period is characterized throughout by its contrast to the foregoing. There is Neo-Romanticism and Symbolism as against Naturalism and Realism. Emotion in-

stead of reason takes the place of honor. The demand for beauty is set up against the demand for truth; an esthetic standard succeeds the ruling ethical one; admiration for that which is heroic and exalted takes the place of admiration for that which is useful. Against materialism and rationalism, both inimical to religion, there rises a new metaphysics and a new religiosity colored with mysticism and often decidedly Catholic in form. History and nature become the great sources of inspiration, and poetry, which had been entirely neglected, has a new and remarkable flowering in all three lands.

1: DENMARK

In Denmark JOHANNES JÖRGENSEN (born 1866) gives the most distinct expression of the definite break with the views of the 80's as to life and art. He is the son of a sea captain of Svendborg, and his childhood home is the theme of his beautiful prose poems, *Ice Flowers* (1926). He went to Copenhagen to study zoology. There the young student quickly became an avowed freethinker and an enthusiastic follower of Brandes; he soon showed literary interests and abilities, and became the center of a little group which counted also as members the poets Viggo Stuckenberg and Sophus Claussen. But the mystic that was latent in Jörgensen gradually reacted both esthetically and religiously against the doctrines of Naturalism; he came under the influence of French Symbolism and of the new Catholic philosophy, which prepared the way for the turning point in his life: his conversion to the Cath-

olic faith, in 1896. His writings quickly won for him a considerable name even outside of Denmark, particularly in the Catholic countries, a fame which led in 1913 to his appointment as docent in Esthetics at the Catholic University of Louvain. The World War drove him from this post. He then took up his residence in Italy and pleaded the cause of the Entente, particularly of Belgium, in a series of pamphlets, *Bell Roland* (1915) and others. He has pictured his own life in the monumental, half poetic autobiography, *The Legend of My Life* (I–IV, 1916–1919).

Johannes Jörgensen's development is distinctly mirrored in his comprehensive and many-sided literary production. He began as an admirer of Brandes and a literary radical, and *Verses,* the book with which he made his début, is influenced by J. P. Jacobsen and the young Gjellerup. But he attained to a symbolistic Neo-Romanticism through the following little books: the collection of poems, *Moods* (1892), and the tales, *Spring Legends* (1888), *A Stranger* (1890), *Summer* (1892), and *The Tree of Life* (1893). Claussen and Stuckenberg also joined this symbolistic Neo-Romantic movement, and its ideas were made known in *The Tower* (1893–94), a magazine which showed the influence of the French. The books from this period reveal the ferment in Jörgensen's mind; their artistry is often uncertain, and they are dominated by an unpleasant erotic imagination. Yet they contain also much of that which is the heart of his writing—the feeling of nostalgia, the decadent's weariness with existence, the profound melancholy which loves to

lose itself in autumnal moods or in memories of the lost happiness of childhood. His talent is decidedly lyrical with a miraculous ability to perceive and intensify a mood, and it is this art of depicting moods that gives his stories value, for considered from the epic standpoint they are very weak. One often finds traces of his wide reading and of his literary prototypes; but it is interesting to see how the impressions obtained from German poetry, from Goethe, Eichendorff, and Heine, are met by the steadily growing influence of the French *fin-de-siècle* literature. In the domain of religion this influence is decisive. Already in his first books there is much that points to a coming revulsion of feeling, a religious awakening. The longing for Eternity grows with each successive work. The struggle that is taking place in his soul may be noted in the beautiful and moving collection of poems, *Confession* (1894), and in *The Travel Book* (1895), the latter being the story of his first journey abroad and his decisive encounter with Catholicism.

After his conversion the character of Jörgensen's literary production underwent a change. The very important collection, *Poems* (1894–98), stands quite alone in the midst of a series of writings taken up with the zealous religious polemics of the newly converted. Some of these writings are directly polemic: *Shams and Vital Truths* (1896), *Conversion* (1899), and others; some are more poetic in form: *The Last Day* (1897), *Parables* (1898), *Our Lady of Denmark* (1901). But a new period begins with the turn of the century. Here we have yet a few

outstanding collections of poems: *Flowers and Fruit* (1907), perhaps his most mature poetry; *From the Deep* (1909), *There Is a Spring Which Flows* (1920), *Brig Marie of Svendborg* (1925); together with a new volume of parables, *As a Thief in the Night* (1921). But most important of all is now his prose: the travel books and the great biographies of Saints. The first category begins with *The Travel Book* and *Beuron* (1895); the most important are *The Pilgrim Book* (1903); *Impressions and Moods* (1911); the books about South Jutland, *The Lost Land* (1912) and *Danimarca* (1921); *Journey to Jerusalem* (1924). Of the biographies of Saints, *Francis of Assisi* (1902) and *Catherine of Siena* (1915) are particularly valuable and appreciated. Jörgensen has here attained a rare mastery of the Danish language; his prose, with its purity and beauty, is fully up to the level of his verse; indeed, it even avoids that monotony which sometimes mars his poetry. *The Book of Goethe* (1913) is typical of the very finest of his artistry with its close mingling of intimate poetry of nature and religious-philosophic meditation.

A valuable book for the understanding of his views on art and life is his *Essays* (1906), which presents the history of the development of Symbolism and characterizes its leading figures.

While Jörgensen's philosophy suffers from his too plainly expressed purpose, the most lasting values are to be met in the best of his poetry, where his restless and seeking spirit has found completely beautiful, heartfelt, and clear expression for peace, quiet,

and rest, and in his travel books, which with their sensitive harmony of form and content are not surpassed by any contemporary Danish prose.

Nearer to the 80's stood Jörgensen's friend, VIGGO STUCKENBERG (1863–1905). The two friends came to differ in their views of life, for in the face of Jörgensen's religious conversion, Stuckenberg firmly maintained his purely ethical, well-nigh agnostic standpoint, but nevertheless Stuckenberg also has a decided place among the Neo-Romanticists, especially by virtue of his soulful and intimate lyric poetry.

The aftermath of the "Modern Awakening"—the situation of youth in the last sad and weary years of the 80's—may be studied in Stuckenberg's first books, *Poems* (1886) and two novels which are typical of the time, *Awakening* (1888) and *Messiah* (1889). Together with Jörgensen and Claussen, Stuckenberg too fought his way out of the gray gloom of Naturalism; he took part in the starting of *The Tower* and made his mark as a writer with the dramatic poem, *The Wild Huntsman* (1894), and the prose dialogues, *Roman Scenes* (1895). Instead of the tiresome realism of the novels of the day we find in *The Wild Huntsman* medieval mysticism and the tone of the folk ballads, and in *Roman Scenes* brilliancy of color, cold ferocity, and the monumental quality of antiquity. The carefully descriptive psychology is succeeded by a Maeterlinckian preference for the unconscious, the sinister depths of the soul, and the mysterious power of the passions. It is the moods of the soul that Stuckenberg studies; and

measuring by the delicate, almost imperceptible fluctuations of these moods, he analyzes the growth of love, its flowering, and its languishing, in the charming little present-day novelette, *Fair Words* (1895), a masterpiece of psychology, but of a psychology which in its attention to soul values is a long way from materialism.

Fair Words ends on a note of happy harmony, but for the rest the author's view of life becomes constantly more gloomy in the last years of the 90's. In *Harpy* (1896) love is seen as the curse of life. There is defiance to society and to citizenry in *Punishable* (1898), the diary of a prisoner who has committed theft in order to provide bread for his wife and child, and in *Asmodeus* (1899), a study of the idle vagabond of the highways; here again the wholly Russian art of depicting moods is the vital point. There is no moral accounting in the spirit of the 80's, but there is psychologic writing dealing with the unsatisfied need for tenderness. There is in Stuckenberg's nature a constant opposition between the outlawed rebel and the solid citizen; in the ingenious little tale, *Sun* (1897), these two views of life are personified in the carriage painter, Hans Haven, with his harum-scarum artistic inclinations, and his circumspect friend, the merchant; and the debate is continued in the little collection of strange, thoughtful tales, *Waybread* (1899).

Even more important than his prose are Stuckenberg's two collections of poems, *Flying Summer* (1898) and *Snow* (1901). It is the poetry of the soul, deeply tinged by emotion. It is all introspective; the world without is silent in the presence of this

solitary and profoundly melancholy personality. Stuckenberg's poetry lays hold upon one not, like Jörgensen's, because of its complete and yet simple beauty, but because it bears witness to the honesty and nobility of the man. Without unchastely baring his ego, his verse is always profoundly personal in its tenderness, as in the poems to his mother and to his wife; it is personal in its defiance, as in the disconsolate *Tue Bengtsön's Ballads;* in its wisdom, as in the little gnomic poems; and in his manly attitude toward life, as in the poem *Confession,* in which he replies to Jörgensen's call to his friends regarding repentance and conversion by calmly acknowledging his responsibility for himself, in both good and evil.

The most interesting and the most individual of the three friends is the lyric poet, Sophus Claussen (born 1865), but he is also the least easily accessible and the least popular in his art of all the Danish authors of the last half century.

Sophus Claussen is a lyricist only, but as such he is one of the most important in Denmark. Aside from his lyrics the only books of his that have interest are his two sprightly travel books, *Antonius in Paris* (1896) and *Pilgrimage,* and their companion piece, *The Romance of the Rose* (1927), together with two volumes of essays, *Dandelion Down* (1918) and *Spring Discourses* (1927). The two last mentioned books contain extremely valuable material throwing light upon Claussen's development as a poet and contributing to the understanding of his peculiar teachings on art. The rest, consisting of some novels,

a collection of tales, a play and a polemic poem, may be ignored. The same is true of his first, quite youthful and rather dilettantish collection of poems, *Children of Nature* (1887), and also of *Titania's Wedding* (1927), his last work up to the time of this writing, and his least important. As early as the closing years of the 80's he struck his own note, liberated as he was by study of the French lyric poetry of Musset, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé. Among his other literary prototypes are both Heine and Drachmann, together with the poetry of Denmark's Golden Age in the first half of the century.

Claussen's fame rests first of all on the enchanting "lyric prelude," *Miss Rainy Weather* (1894), a little comedy in verse after the manner of Musset—gay moods in gay, easily flowing verse; an idyllic picture from an idyllic Danish provincial town with moonlight and a summer evening's infatuation and with a sulky rainy day mood the following day. Other works which contribute to his fame are the five great collections of poetry: *Willow Flutes* (1899), *Diableries* (1904), *Danish Verses* (1912), *Fables* (1917) and *Heroica* (1925).

Back of this poetry lies the romantic conception of the poet as a genius with the right of a genius to go his own way. His aim is to "build a city in the air." Poetry must neither obey nor imitate the external world; it is itself in covenant with the deepest forces of existence, "for it possesses for itself the secret creative law: everything from within." His esthetic theory is that of Symbolism. Symbolism is synthesis, where Naturalism was analysis; Symbolism is intuition, where Naturalism was rationalistic empiricism.

In little things it is love for nuances and dread of that which is too plain. In big things it is metaphysics —a proclamation of the obscure coherence of things back of the outer world of the senses.

These international theories, however, are transposed into poetic practice in a mind colored by the gentle loveliness of Danish nature. Claussen was born on Langeland and brought up on Falster, two of the most smiling and most fertile of the Danish islands. Hence his bright Danish humor, hence his playful, frolicsome, capricious imagination. The luxuriantly idyllic is dominant in his nature lyrics. He loves the Danish summer, the yellow fields and the green grass. He can describe the baking glare of the sun on a highway white with dust, and he sings of the summer rain in some of his most beautiful verse. But nearly always nature remains a symbol; it does not exist for its own sake in his art.

Symbolic too are his many poems dealing with situations. With sly humor he sketches a picture in a few lines which the reader must fill in for himself. He masters as none other the art of being gracefully waggish; he plays like a satyr with the most daring themes—but suddenly, in the midst of his gayety, he is serious again, with a personally felt pain because everything is transitory; because love fluctuates eternally between "foe to the death" and "dearly beloved"; and happiness is merely bereavement and yearning. From such a poem as *Smoke* emerges with mystic power the symbol: the smoke of the railway train in the hour of parting grows into a picture of the tension of forces, of life itself.

From all sides his writing points toward the char-

acteristic poetry of thought which is its innermost essence. It is not obvious didactic poetry, and its value lies less in the teachings that are conveyed than in the manner of their conveyance. It consists of visions, clouds, mists—consciously dim, often hopelessly obscure, but visions which spur the reader on to build further, to ponder over the alluring riddles.

Back of these pictures is concealed a curious duality in Claussen's mind, an expressed dualism—deep pessimism contrasted with a trusting faith in life, which longs in vain for higher harmony.

Claussen is a pessimist. He feels art as a sacrifice of the poet's human happiness, and he complains of art's meager place in life. The poet, who prophetically points out the new ways, is crowded out by his opposite, the journalist, whose slogan is: "Publicity, the philosopher's stone." (*The Stairway to Hell.*) Fine and noble natures bleed to death internally because of the growing brutality of the age, he says in his *Rhymed Letter to Herman Bang;* commercialism and industrialism are killing both beauty and happiness. This pessimism may sink into weary resignation, into longing for death, as in *Buddha* and *The Great Rhythm;* it may take the form of despair over the shipwreck of life, as in the wonderful commemorative poem on the death of Stuckenberg's wife. But it may also release itself in demoniac gallows humor, which sees life as hopeless but at the same time ludicrous and without meaning, as in *The Ballad of Himperigimpe.*

Withal Claussen is unable to give up his faith in life. From his first book to his last he feels the need to affirm life, to hold fast to the thought of a unity

behind the apparent lack of meaning. He sees existence as the tension of forces, the great eternal meeting between life and death, as in *The Mists of Aphrodite, Man, In the Sign of the Lion, The Revolt of the Atoms*. He suspects that life and death are but two manifestations of the same force, and that some day there shall be found a higher unity beyond the bonds of the law and beyond freedom. Back of the perplexity of his dualism lies, especially in his latest books, a religious longing for expiation, for the great god Pan. The gay willow flute becomes the romantic miracle trumpet; the poet pauses devoutly before the great and mystic coherence of the All—unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity.

A companion piece to the nature poetry of Sophus Claussen is found in the work of LUDVIG HOLSTEIN (born 1864), a native of Southern Sealand. The smiling and idyllic landscape picture characteristic of the Danish islands is found in them both. Holstein's *Poems* (1895), with their warm, wholesome joy in nature and their harmony of mood and art, came as a revelation to his weary, dejected, and blasé *fin-de-siècle* contemporaries. His poetry has nothing in common with the over-refinement and stylistic affectation which so often mar the work of the Neo-Romanticists; it reminds one first and foremost of the joyous and harmonious romanticism of the Danish Golden Age in the first half of the century when Oehlenschläger and Christian Winther flourished. There is a summer mood in his art, which is wonderfully intimate both in content and in form.

After a pause of twenty years Holstein resumed

his writing of lyric poetry with the collections *Leaves* (1915), *Moss and Mould* (1917), and *Apple Time* (1920). The two last mentioned are particularly good. It is as if there were a high, clear September sky over them; the author's joy in nature deepens into a warm feeling of unity with the earth and its people, an optimistic natural piety, which is seen also in the religious philosophical essay, *The Green Field* (1925).

Finally, in the romantic love drama, *Tove* (1896), Holstein has dealt with a medieval Danish theme which has tempted a long succession of modern poets, for example, J. P. Jacobsen in *Gurre Songs* and Drachmann in *Gurre*. Dramatically speaking, the play is quite without movement, but it is carried by its intensely lyric mood and by the style, in which one finds influences both of Maeterlinck and of Shakespeare.

While Jörgensen, Stuckenberg, and Claussen have stood, in the eyes of their contemporaries, as the leaders of the Neo-Romantic awakening, the future will no doubt see in the youngest writer of this period, Helge Rode (born 1870), the central figure in the trend away from Naturalism.

Helge Rode was born in Copenhagen but brought up in Norway. At the age of twenty he returned to Denmark, joined Esmann's circle, and made his début with the "decadent" tale, *Strength* (1891). This first book was not promising, but his very next work, the collection of poems, *White Flowers* (1892), discloses the author's true personality with its ardent animation and its deep feeling of wonder-

ment toward life. Rode at this time went through a spiritual awakening, an experience which deepened and broadened his outlook on life and which inspired the chief works of his youth, the drama, *Sons of Kings,* and the beautiful collection, *Poems* (1896). Through these works he allies himself with the symbolistic Neo-Romanticism of the 90's, and in the same spirit are also the two modern plays, *Summer Adventures* (1897) and *The Dance Goes On* (1898), together with the remarkable collection of tales, *The Traveler* (1900), in which his peculiar irony for the first time finds full expression.

The next decade (1901–1910) is taken up chiefly with dramatic production, the two outstanding exceptions being the fascinating travel book, *Italy* (1909), and *Poems, Old and New* (1907). Among the new poems in the latter collection are the commemorative poems, the poems about Italy, and some beautiful personal poems. The dramatic work consists of attempts in various manners: the gloomy tragedy, *The Battles in Stefan Borg's Home* (1901), after the manner of Ibsen; the metropolitan tragedy, *Morbus Tellermann* (1907), one of the author's most powerful works; the primitive "prehistoric" dramas, *Sun Legends* (1904) and *Cain and Abel* (1909); the tragi-comedies, in which the dominant note is sympathetic irony, *Comedies* I–II (1905), including the spiritualistic comedy, *Mads Bondegaard's Halo* and particularly the tragicomedy, *Bartholin's Day of Joy;* and finally the satirical comedy, *The Flight* (1909).

Rode's last period is dominated by the two great collections of poems *Ariel* (1914), which is his

chief work and one of the finest productions of the newer Danish lyric poetry, and *The Quiet Garden* (1922), and furthermore by the brilliant and splendidly written philosophical work, *War and Intellect* (1917), and by his critical essays, which contain his real casting up of accounts with Brandesianism in the domain of esthetics as well as in those of philosophy and religion. Of his collections of essays one may mention, among others, *The Regeneration in Danish Intellectual Life* (1923) and *The Square with the Green Trees* (1924). Less important are his plays of this period. Some of them are too evidently based on actual events of the moment, as *Count Peasant and His House* (1912), which is inspired by Tolstoy's death; *The Great Shipwreck* (1917), which seems to have been written about the catastrophe of the World War; and *A Man Went Down from Jerusalem*, the chief character in which is plainly modeled after Georg Brandes. Others are purely occasional works, such as the fairy festival play, *The Mother* (1921), which celebrates South Jutland's reunion with Denmark in 1920. The one-act play *Everything is Good* (1928) is to be classed with his little tragi-comedies.

As a dramatist Rode distinguishes himself by his inventiveness and his sound grasp of his theme. The statement of his problem is often interesting; the exposition is nearly always excellent. But his delineation of character is sometimes incomplete and lacking in clarity, and back of his need for strong scenic effects one often notes the lack of true dramatic life. He has given his best work in the profound symbolism of *Sons of Kings*, a classic picture of

the eternal strife between light-heartedness and melancholy, between life and death; in the bitter tragi-comedy of *Bartholin's Day of Joy;* and in the magnificent, primitive simplicity of *Sun Legends.* His most lifelike figure is the incredibly impudent Professor Arnesen in *The Flight,* a Danish "climber" type, reproduced with rich humor.

Much more important is his poetry. Animated and spiritual throughout, it reminds one by its airy lightness of Shelley; it is capable of transposing the most uncorporeal moods into beautiful music, but also of expressing warmly and radiantly his joy in the great silent glory of nature and in life's vivid colors. It is cosmic poetry, born in the soul of a modern mystic, and the fundamental note in Rode's poetry —as in his *Sons of Kings*—is the tremulous feeling of the meeting of life and death. He stands in pious wonderment before the riddle of existence, and both his feeling for beauty and his gay irony have a peculiar background of religious mysticism.

In the Neo-Romanticism of Denmark—as elsewhere—it is possible to point out, besides the tendency to profound spirituality, another trend in which the joy in beauty and the cultivation of that which is great and heroic are the chief considerations. Its chief representatives are Niels Möller and Sophus Michaëlis.

The more important of the two is Niels Möller (born 1859). His father, like Jörgensen's, was a sea captain from Svendborg, and his childhood impressions of the lives of sailors and the harsh poetry of the sea have deeply marked his writing. Added

to this is the influence of his comprehensive and scholarly studies of historical and literary-historical subjects, especially concerning Hellas and the England of the Renaissance. These studies are reflected in his treatises, *Night Watches* (1923) and *The Literature of the World* (1927 et seq.). His first book, the collection of poems *Autumn* (1888), marks a decided break with the poetical conception of the 80's. It was followed by two collections of tales, *Happenings* (1890) and *Juggleries* (1895). In 1897 came a new and important collection of poems, *Voices,* and finally, in 1920, he collected the production of twenty-five years into the large volume of verse, *The Oak Grove.* In addition to his original work he has produced characteristic translations of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Browning, and others.

Niels Möller's fine lyric poetry stands alone in the newer Danish literature because of its depth of thought and its linguistic power, but also because of its obscurity and the difficulty of comprehending it. Pindar and Aeschylus, Browning and Swinburne have given his verses their dizzying dithyrambic flight, taught him to revel in hard, strong, unusual words and broad, powerful rhythms; but they taught him also to formulate his thoughts so brusquely and energetically, without any ameliorating transitions, that their apprehension is sometimes made difficult. It is meditative poetry, glorifying the human will's untiring battle against all obstacles, praising the strife and the happiness of the searcher after truth. Against the background of the feeble poetry of his time Niels Möller is effective because

of his manliness, instinct with the vigor of the sea, and because of his artistic austerity.

An artist and a decided adherent of art for art's sake is SOPHUS MICHAËLIS (born 1865). His first books are merely echoes of Naturalism, but he was successful with the collection of poems, *Sunflowers* (1893), and strongly influenced by French literature he took his place among the Neo-Romanticists with a series of colorful works instinct with love of beauty: historical tales such as *Æbelö* (1895), a fantasy of medieval Denmark, and *Giovanni* (1901), a love story of ancient Florence, and the three large collections of poems, *Lilacs* (1898), *Life's Festival* (1900) and *The Palms* (1904).

During the years that followed Michaëlis wrote a series of plays, of which only *Revolutionary Wedding* (1906) was of any importance. It became a world success and is a powerful theater piece with its characterization somewhat after the order of popular comedy and a style whose rhetoric is not always true. In 1912 came the broadly planned Napoleonic novel, *1812, the Eternal Sleep*, an attempt to create a modern epos. It contains some good incidents, but it is marred by the lack of taste in the concluding chapters. It was followed in 1914 by his chief work, *Greek and Barbarian,* a vivid and imaginative description of the war of the Greeks against the Persians and Xerxes's expedition to Hellas. In style and technique it shows the influence of Flaubert's *Salammbô.* To the more noteworthy of the books of Michaëlis belongs also a collection of short stories inspired in part by the World War, to-

gether with two collections of verse, one containing poems of travel in Japan. Among his exquisite translations there are special grounds for emphasizing his rendition of Goethe's *Faust*.

Like his French prototypes, Michaëlis is a worshipper of beauty; he loves that which is opulent, strong, and picturesque, and he seeks by preference that which is distant in space and time as a protest against the drabness of everyday life. His art is descriptive; he shows virtuosity in painting the externals of reality, but he is a poor psychologist, and the delineation of human beings is the weak point in his books. For this reason he is most successful with the long historical novels, in which individuals give way to the mighty mass effects. In the drama he is decidedly at his worst. As a poet he lacks feeling and temperament; here again he is at his best in the descriptive form; he is often banal when he wishes to be profound, and, linguistically considered, his verse lacks color and individuality.

A special position is occupied by Karl Larsen and Gustav Wied, continuing the line from the 80's, although both of them go beyond Naturalism.

KARL LARSEN (born 1860) has shown himself in tales and short plays to be a fastidious master of form, and among his psychological novels the paradoxical *Dr. Ix* (1896) is especially fascinating. He is first and foremost an observer, and he goes to work scientifically to gather a rich store of material for his descriptions. For this reason his best books are *In the Old Quarter of the Ramparts* (1899) which describes a milieu, and his studies of the

broadest strata of Copenhagen, *Outside the Ranking Classes* (1896), *Kresjan Vesterbro* (1897) and *The Heyday Boy,* which is one of the tales in the excellent collection *Danish Men* (1898).

Larsen is not merely a typical Copenhagener; he is a cosmopolitan, or more correctly, a tourist. His descriptions of travel display his remarkable ability to receive and to communicate impressions from the most widely different countries and people. His travel books include *Circles, Pleasure Voyages, Poetic Germany,* etc., and from the tourist there arises a social moralist who, steadily becoming more closely allied with German Imperialism, proclaims the rights of the State over the individual, and who, during the World War, ably defended Germany.

Gustav Wied (1858–1914) seems by his trend and his choice of subjects to be a Naturalist, but his preference for fantastic caricature and his constant desire to destroy the illusion are decidedly not Realism. His production is very comprehensive and of very uneven value. Least interesting are his tales; the weakness of his novels is in the action, but their strength lies in a mosaic of excellent individual scenes with a group of odd types brilliantly presented. Especially interesting are *Life's Evil* (1899), an idyl of a market town, and the two cheerless but powerful racial novels, *The Race* (1898) and *The Fathers Eat Grapes.* His most individual work is in his plays, especially the so-called satyr plays with loosely constructed scenes in which the author in stage directions constantly takes part in the dialogue, giving information, explaining and

criticizing. Among his plays may be mentioned *Four Satyr Plays* (1897), *The Weaker Sex* (1900) and particularly *Dancing Mice* (1905). Wied's art excels in the ability to observe and to reproduce reality; it is great in small things, but it lacks the power for the broad strokes. The result is droll situations, but not figures which hang together. The peculiar stamp of his art comes from his outlook on life, in which we find strong contrasts: cynical mockery, the desire to bring out the beast in man—and at the same time veneration for that which is childlike and gentle, longing for that which is pure and fine, often to the verge of sentimentality; imperturbable peasant realism—and at the same time a predilection for things contrary to reason, for the romanticism of horror and for the psychology of the fulminating novel. Back of his apparent desire to scandalize there is always hidden the longing for a lost idyl.

2: NORWAY

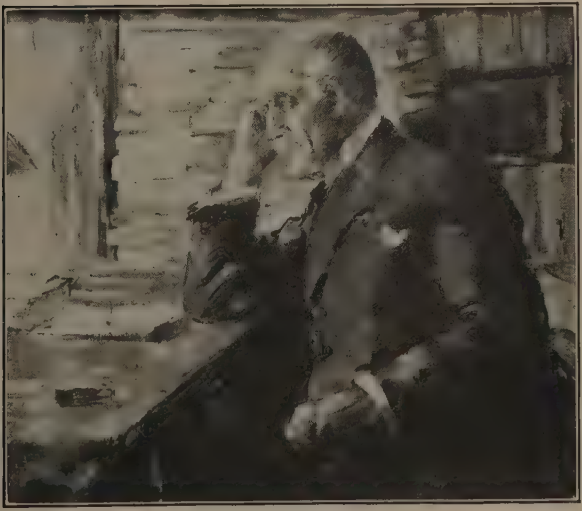
In Norway this period is characterized by the rediscovery of the natural grandeur of the country, which has also provided a new background for the outlook on man. Literature seeks out the primitive, the natural; it becomes more consciously national, with strong emphasis on peasant types.

The pioneer genius is KNUT HAMSUN (born 1859). His apprenticeship was long and unusual. He was born in Gudbrandsdalen, but at the age of four he found his home in Lofoten, Nordland. In his youth he began to learn the trade of shoemaker, and at the same time he tried his hand at writing,

but attracted no attention. He soon tired of his trade and for several years led the life of a footloose wanderer and vagabond; he was successively a school teacher, a road laborer, and a stone-cutter, until finally he went to America, where he became assistant to a Unitarian minister! After a brief visit home in 1885, he returned to the United States and tried his hand as an agricultural laborer, a lecturer, and a street-car conductor in Chicago. When he again went home he was thoroughly cured of all enthusiasm for the United States. In 1888 the first fragments of his novel *Hunger* attracted attention in the Danish magazine *New Earth*. In 1889 he published *The Intellectual Life of America,* in which he boldly denied the existence of any such thing, flayed men of acknowledged greatness, and expressed his contempt for democratic mob rule. At the same time he violently attacked the literature of the 80's with its dogmas and its types, and in 1890 he won his first decisive victory with *Hunger*.

This brilliant book is laid in Christiania (now Oslo), and it pictures a young author's hopeless struggle for existence. Hunger itself, which gradually breaks down his nervous system, is described realistically enough, but the point of view is quite other than that of Naturalism. Hamsun had learned from Dostoievski and, so far as style is concerned, from Mark Twain. Everything is subjectively apprehended; the book deals with the moods that hunger calls forth, the visions and wild imaginings of fever; the total disturbance of the normal mental life. At the same time his style, by its sensitivity and

Hans E. Kinck



Knut Hamsun

From a Painting by Henrik Lund

its wealth of nuances, marks a complete rebirth of Norwegian prose.

Hamsun's next book, *Mysteries* (1892), is a further revelation of the ego with which all his works deal. This is represented in part by the mysterious Johan Nilsen Nagel, a wanderer and an artist, a maker of paradoxes and a hoaxer; in part by his antithesis, the lowly cripple, Minutten. Everything possible is mingled together in this formless and eccentric but interesting novel; through it all runs the Nietzschean contempt for the masses and the average man, and with brilliant eloquence Hamsun hits out at the prophets of the time, Gladstone, Tolstoy, Ibsen.

The Nagel type, the lone spectator and wanderer, reappears, greater in stature and with the mighty scenery of Nordland as background, in one of Hamsun's most distinguished works, *Pan* (1894). This is the story of Lieutenant Glahn, a nomad whose life is dedicated to the chase, to Nature, and to women. He becomes a mystic symbol of Nature itself, in forest and wilderness, in the glory of summer and in the serene calm of autumn; the author's powerful lyric prose lifts reality to the plane of a fairy world of vast dimensions and enrapturing depth of feeling. Seldom in the literature of the world has the romanticism of Nature found such magnificent expression as in this little book.

Hamsun has his say about his own time in the novels *Editor Lynge* and *Shallow Soil* (*Ny Jord,* 1893). In the dramatic trilogy, *At the Gate of the Kingdom, The Game of Life,* and *Sunset* (1895–1898) he proclaims his superman principles through the medium of the philosopher, Ivar Kareno, con-

trasting the thinker with the woman; the faithful and self-sacrificing champion of the idea, with the shallow and Americanized cultural Philistine. In contrast to the deeply pessimistic conception of love as the inflexible natural force, which in *The Game of Life* is personified in the strange character, Teresita, we have the charming and somewhat sentimental love story, *Victoria* (1898). But the desperation which we find in *The Game of Life* reappears in the play, *In the Grip of Life* (1910), and particularly in the long dramatic poem in eight acts, *Munken Vendt* (1902), which in spite of many beautiful details is a complete failure. As in *Mysteries,* its two poles are defiance and the submissive feeling of defeat, and it preaches the doctrine that good and evil, light and dark, are values of equal rank.

The theme of *Pan,* the glorification of the natural man, is continued in his short stories, *In Fairyland* (1903) and others, and in the long novels, full of poetic feeling, *Dreamers* (1904), *Under the Autumn Star* (1906), *A Wanderer Plays on Muted Strings* (1909) and *The Last Joy* (1912). These are wanderer books, glorifying the flight from society out into the great forests, to the freedom of nature, and to steady, simple toil. Related to these in mood are the Nordland pictures, *Benoni* (1907) and *Rosa* (1908).

The two novels, *Children of the Age* (1913) and *Segelfoss Town* (1915), which belong together, constitute a new major work. Hamsun, who in his earlier books interests himself only in his chief character, has succeeded here in creating a complete picture of a milieu with the various social types; a

satirical picture of Norway, executed with glowing humor and sparkling wit. The action takes place in Nordland about the Segelfoss estate, and it pictures the sudden transformation of this patriarchally governed property into the new settlement which shoots up with American rapidity on the ruins of the estate. In this community of parvenus and rascals, Hamsun's wanderer and fault-finder is the bungling telegrapher, Baardsen, one of his most original and most vivid figures.

These books won the great public for Hamsun; his world-wide popularity and the Nobel Prize resulted from *Growth of the Soil* (1917). With its "back to nature" message, this book came as a gospel in the dark days of the war. Broad, massive, and luxuriant, it is a prose poem of the soil and the son of the soil, of the man who begins from the beginning, clears the forest, brings the waste places under cultivation, and looks with youthful eyes upon the great miracle of existence. But this optimism has given way to a new bitterness in his next two books, in which one notes a certain weariness: *The Women at the Pump* (1920) and *Chapter the Last* (1923). His latest novel, *Tramps* (1927), returns to the wanderer motif, which is once more played through with the old virtuosity.

Hamsun's two collections of poems, *The Wild Chorus* (1904) and *Poems* (1921), contain some fine verse expressing moods of nature, and a splendid poem to Björnson; but it is as a writer of prose that he stands highest. As a literary artist he is one of the greatest in the North, and his brilliant though dangerous example has impressed itself deeply, not

only on modern Norwegian literature, but also upon that of the other Scandinavian countries.

The supreme representative of Romanticism on a national foundation is HANS E. KINCK (1865–1926), the greatest writer in Norway of our time, and the one most difficult of approach. While the art of the 80's was largely international in character, the reaction comes now with Kinck and his strong emphasis on national characteristics. He is a race psychologist, a folk psychologist; all his characters are placed in relation to the milieu, the district, or the people from which they have sprung. The tension in his writing lies in the interplay between the individual and the nation.

At the same time the people are seen against the background of nature. Kinck was reared in the valleys of Western Norway; his peasants speak the dialect of Sætesdal or of Hardanger. Along with Hamsun he is the greatest portrayer of nature in modern Norwegian literature, but the difference between them is obvious. With Kinck nature is wintry, harsh, and wild; its dismal moods communicate themselves also to men. The world that he shows us is one of struggle and horror; everything has taken on greater and uglier dimensions than in real life; he loves exaggeration; even his humor is coarse and vulgar, almost harsh.

Kinck is a philosopher in the field of the history of culture; he takes for his themes the transition periods, the periods of decay, where two cultures are struggling against each other, or where the individual is in conflict with society. In the past, therefore, he goes back to thirteenth century Norway, as

in the treatise, *Period of Greatness* (1922), or to the struggle between Renaissance and baroque in Italy, where his heroes are Machiavelli and Aretino. In the present he concerns himself with the conflict between peasant culture and the culture of the official classes in Norway.

Like most of his contemporaries, Kinck began as an orthodox Naturalist. His first two novels, *The Wood Nymph* (1892) and *A Young People* (1893), showed talent but not a great deal of individuality. But the collection of tales, *Bats' Wings* (1895), revealed him as a full-blooded Norwegian Romanticist, and in his novels, *Sighing Wind* (1896) and *The Adder* (1898) later worked into one novel entitled *Herman Ek* (1923), he found his real theme: the collision between the deeply rooted national culture and the new foreign ideas from the intellectual life of Europe.

These books formed the introduction to a very comprehensive output of about forty large volumes, including eleven collections of short stories, a long series of full-length novels, plays, essays on historical and literary-historical subjects, personal observations on the European cultural crisis following the World War under the title *Steersman Overboard!* (1920), etc. Only the most typical of his works shall be mentioned here.

He is most easily approachable and his artistic touch is surest in his short stories. Besides *Bats' Wings,* special mention should be made of the collections *From Sea to Mountain Ridge* (1897), *Spring Nights* (1901), *When Love Dies* (1903), *The Church Is Burning* (1917) and *From Fonne-*

land to Svabergssveen (1922). Here are nature pictures of unforgettable power, often in the form of the fairy tale; enchanting erotic stories which seldom picture happiness, but rather fear and the feeling of loneliness in love; and finally sketches of peasant life in every key from deep pathos to keen irony or broad humor.

The novels contain excellent individual scenes and brilliantly drawn characters, but the action is often weak and arbitrary, and the books are weighed down by the author's predilection for long drawn out, though brilliant and interesting argumentative observations. Kinck's passion for discussion and paradox has found an outlet in his many fault-finders, such as Dr. Gabriel Jahr in the Christiania novel of that name (1902), Dr. Röst in *Emigrants,* and Vraal in the drama *The Drover.* His most interesting novels are *Herman Ek, Emigrants* (1904) and *The Avalanche* (1918–1919).

Herman Ek deals with the conflict between individuality and nationality. The action takes place in the troublous years of the 90's. The chief character finds his mind at war with itself between the wish to become one of the people and defiantly to assert his independence. He tires of the student world and returns to his home to live as a peasant, but he is deeply disappointed. In spite of everything he has become a stranger; the people soon turn against him, and in his conflict with them, while he busies himself with reform plans that are to revolutionize the district, he falls a victim to their hate.

A cultural battle is described also in *Emigrants.* In the little mountain district are representatives

of both ossified age and forward-striving youth, of the timid compromisers and the pompous phrase-makers. The development of the story is typically Norwegian—with epidemics of religious revival and unsound worship of Mammon and fraudulent schemes; with the confinement and restraint which are the causes of youth's longing to go to America. In the midst of this picture Kinck has placed the controversialist and experimenter, Dr. Röst, an aristocratic anarchist, who for his own enjoyment destroys everything and everybody.

Finally, the long novel of a country district, *The Avalanche,* which is laid in the 70's, centers in the conflict between the peasants and the "bigwigs," that is, the officials and the large estate owners outside the peasant class. The plot is excellent, and the author has a firm grasp of his material; the first part forms itself into a great picture of violent and dramatic unease; but the later volumes do not measure up to the first; they are marred by exaggerations and tiresome repetitions.

The scenes of most of Kinck's dramas are laid in Italy, a country which he loved and knew thoroughly and which he has described in several fine books, *Italians* (1904), *Old Soil* (1907) and others. The time is that of the late Renaissance and the baroque; there is blood, passion, and strong color in these plays, which defy all current rules of dramatic technique. There is beauty in *Agilulf the Wise* (1906), based upon *Decameron* III, 3. *The Wedding at Genoa* (1911) is violent and passionate. But the most important of the plays are those dealing with Kinck's two heroes, Machiavelli and

Aretino. Machiavelli, of whom Kinck has given a sympathetic picture in *People of the Renaissance* (1916), appears in the drama *Toward Carnival Time* (1915) as the great leader, the genius, who proudly elevates himself above the masses. Aretino, of whom he has drawn an interesting portrait in *A Knight of the Pen* (1911), is the central figure in the mighty tragedy, *The Last Guest* (1910), a play which possesses all the heavy, plethoric beauty of the baroque period. In this play Aretino, who is growing old and weary, faces death, which mercilessly unveils the emptiness and shabbiness back of his shining outer mask.

Kinck's art has found its most personal and most noteworthy expression in the long dramatic poem, *The Drover* (1908). The chief character is a wandering horse-trader named Vraal; but his figure has supernatural dimensions; it becomes a symbol. He is the great disturber of peace, who brings confusion everywhere; but he helps men, although he himself is outside their social organization. He is a strange mingling of the bard who is able to conjure forth the most wonderful aerial visions for his enraptured listeners, and the peddler who quite prosaically cheats them in the midst of his poetic flights to the heavens. At the same time he is a genius; divided between longing for home and longing to fare abroad, tortured by doubts and memories. Like Herman Ek he seeks the peasants and is repudiated by them in the end. There is much in his nature that reminds one of Peer Gynt, and like the latter he holds, deep down beneath his skepticism and his doubt, a belief in the *das ewig Weibliche*, which, in

the person of Bol, finally delivers him from his suffering. The work is difficult to understand, but enchanting, not least because of its strange versification, which, breaking all metrical laws and carried solely by its feeling, is able to encompass everything from vulgar witticism to ecstatic pantheistic moods upon the mountain top.

Hans E. Kinck is as yet the least widely read of the great Norwegian writers, but his purely original and powerful art will surely prove that it possesses the vitality to live beyond the day and hour.

The spiritual awakening which we in Denmark encountered in several of the best men of the 90's, in Jörgensen, Stuckenberg, and Rode, has in Norway its most characteristic representative in SIGBJÖRN OBSTFELDER (1866–1900). He died young, and his works are but few: a small volume, *Poems* (1893); *Two Novelettes* (1895); two short novels, *The Cross* (1896) and *A Parson's Diary* (1900); a short play, *The Red Drops* (1897), and a volume of *Posthumous Works* (1903—that is all.

Obstfelder felt himself a stranger in the world. His outer life was a chain of disappointments in his restless striving to find his true place in existence. It seemed to his wondering soul that he had come to a wrong planet. All his writing is an expression of his seeking and yearning for the real truth: the eternal back of the sham world of outward appearances. But his thoughts of eternity seldom bring peace. Like the stars in the night sky they shine against a background of fear and dread, which dominates several of his prose poems; but he is also

full of sympathy and compassion for mankind. He reminds one both of Poe and of Dostoievski, and it is scarcely by chance that his most profound poem, *Nameless*, leads one's thoughts to a well-known scene in *Raskolnikov.*

Closely related to this melancholy longing for eternity is the erotic feeling in Obstfelder's work. Eternity is apprehended through love. That is the fundamental thought in the short story, *Life*, about the fatally ill Icelandic girl, as also in his best work, *The Cross*, in which the man's jealousy and the woman's tarnished past crush the happiness of both, but in which the martyrdom of her voluntary death opens up to his view eternity and the depth of inner life. The little play, *The Red Drops*, about the chemist, Odd, who seeks the law of all life, becomes, through its two women, a play concerning earthly and heavenly love; a play about love which binds the genius to the earth, and his Muse, who draws him heavenward.

Characteristic of Obstfelder is the purely symbolic form which he always employs. His unrhymed poems, his prose lyrics, his novels, and his play—all are composed in the same style; terse, mystical, full of foreboding, of a peculiar and strangely obscure beauty which obtains its effects by pauses, by allusions, the double groundwork back of the seemingly so simple and artless words. It is precisely by its strange incompleteness that his art moves us.

Nils Collett Vogt (born 1864) has written both novels, such as the autobiographical period

novel, *The Family's Sorrow* (1889), and plays, such as *Tense Minds* (1910) and *Therese* (1914), but it is as a lyricist that he will be remembered.

His first collection, *Poems* (1887), revealed him as an enthusiastic radical and rebel in political and social questions, of a fiery and irascible temperament. His poetic emergence is *From Spring to Fall* (1894); his decisive experience was a sojourn in Italy, the promised land of all Northern Romanticists, which brought forth a succession of colorful, pagan poems in praise of antiquity in the spirit of Swinburne and Schiller.

But gradually the character of his poetry underwent a change, as may be noted in *Music and Spring* (1896), *The Precious Bread* (1900), and *September Fire* (1907). The tone became more quiet and subdued, but also more bitter and despondent, full of sympathy for the losers in the conflict. His last collections, *Homecoming* (1917) and *Down from the Mountain* (1924), point to a new harmony in his relation to life. There are in them sorrowful lamentations for lost youth, but there are also mature expressions of the peace that comes with the autumn of life, and there is a virile love for Norway, its scenery, its people, and its language, which is perhaps the deepest emotion of this honest and straightforward poet.

One of the most promising of the young generation was TRYGGVE ANDERSEN (1866–1920). He was at once a pronounced Romanticist with a predilection for the grotesque and harrowing, and master of a limpid classic style, whose distinguished and

transparent epic prose retained its serenity and its magnificent lines even in the treatment of the strangest themes. The heroes of his youth were, significantly enough, J. P. Jacobsen, Novalis, Hoffmann—and Lessing!

Tryggve Andersen comes from the eastern part of Norway, from the Hamar district with its inland scenery, its large farms, and its well-to-do peasants; and he has pictured his native soil in the excellent book which is his contribution to Norwegian literature, *From the Days of the Chancery Counsellor* (1897). This is a series of closely connected tales which present a unique picture, from the standpoint of cultural history, of an inland district in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The stories cover the period from 1804 to 1812; their tragic central figure is the imperious district judge, Counsellor Weydahl, but they include besides a rich and varied gallery of men and women of the Empire period whose ways of thinking and feeling are vividly presented. The author shows the gradual deterioration of the officials in their isolated houses, and sets up in contrast to them the sound and solid peasants. The whole is framed in beautiful and clear nature pictures.

After this classic work Tryggve Andersen wrote a long, romantically harrowing novel, *Toward Evening* (1900); a confessional book, whose chief character is a neurasthenic, and which ends in a dismal fantasy about the Day of Judgement. During the last twenty years of his life he produced only some collections of short stories, which contain excellent things, but which show his creative power gradually

weakening. He was never able to make good the great promise of his first book.

From the South of Norway, from the city of Christianssand, come the brothers Krag. The elder, Thomas P. Krag (1868–1913), made his début in 1891 with the novel *Jon Græff*, a somber, monotonous picture from his home district, which forms the point of departure for all of his later work. Most characteristic of him is the novel *The Brazen Serpent* (1895); of his other works one may mention *Ada Wilde* (1896), *Ulf Ran* (1897), and *Gunvor Kjeld* (1904). Krag's solemn and ponderous, strongly lyrical prose completely bursts the bounds of the novel. His books have—aside from *Gunvor Kjeld*—but one person, the chief character; the rest are accessories. And this one person is, with few variations, the same in all of them; a lonely and melancholy individual, who gradually becomes a stranger to the world and loses himself, as it were, in the somber and depressing nature picture which surrounds him. The prototype for Krag's prose is Victor Hugo; he is capable, momentarily, of rising to heights of sublime pathos, but in the long run the effect is wearisome and monotonous.

Vilhelm Krag (born 1871) won a great popular victory with his *Poems* (1891), from which both Grieg and Sinding drew inspiration for beautiful melodies. His verse is elegant and ingratiating, but quite unoriginal; his models, J. P. Jacobsen and Drachmann, are plainly discernible. In a long succession of poems, novels, and plays he is the representative of popular romanticism; his most genuine works

are his descriptions in verse and prose of the coastal regions of Western and Southern Norway, but he belongs, after all, decidedly among the epigoni, and he has all their faults and their virtues.

Outside the dominant currents of the period stand those authors who deal with contemporary folk life and the little group of writers who continue the Bohême literature of the 80's.

The leading man of the folk writers is the charming and excellent story-writer, HANS AANRUD (born 1863). He was born in Western Gausdal and is a typical representative of Eastern Norway; with an undimmed faith in life and a predilection for the quiet idyl, but capable also of sly satire. His classic tales picture life in a friendly and well-to-do district. His note of good-natured irony is definitely struck in his first tale, *How Our Lord Got Asmund Bergemellem's Hay*, and it is carried on in his many excellent short *Stories* (1891 et seq.) and in the longer novelettes, such as *Lisbeth Longfrock* (*Sidsel Sidsærk*, 1903) and *Sölve Solfeng* (1910). Besides his peasant idyls he has written satires of city life in the three Christiania comedies, *The Stork* (1895), *On a High Horse* (1906) and *The Cock* (1906); the last mentioned even ends as a Lucianic journey to the beyond, with joyous mockery of the strifes of the theologians.

Among the other writers of stories from folk life may be mentioned JACOB B. BULL (born 1853) and JACOB HILDITCH (born 1864), and among the writers of Landsmaal, RASMUS LÖLAND (1861–

1907), HANS SELAND (born 1867) and the lyric poet, ANDERS HOVDEN (born 1860).

In opposition to Neo-Romanticism we have, finally, certain writers who are building further on the foundation of the 80's. Common to them all is their furious desperation. Gloomy and cheerless are the writings of THEODOR MADSEN (born 1858); crude pictures of human unhappiness and misery, such as *Drifting* (1890), *The Finger of God* (1893) and *Beneath the Tree of Knowledge* (1897), but they reveal him as a remarkable psychologist and a skillful portrayer of contemporary life. In the work of GABRIEL FINNE (1866–1899) the fundamental mood is one of desperation and wild defiance of the social order. His art shuns no theme, and his language sticks at no word; he studies by preference the coarsest and most elementary emotions; his particular tendency is to show the hatred of age for youth, as in *The Philosopher* (1889), *Young Sinners* (1891), and *Dr. Wang's Children* (1890). His most effective work is the weird play, *The Owl* (1893), which reminds one of Maeterlinck's youthful dramas. Even weirder in his effects is ARNE DYBFEST (1868–1892), whose perverse anarchism is quite in the spirit of Hans Jæger. His works are: *Ira* (1891) and *Two Novelettes* (1892).

The controversialist of the period is NILS KJÆR (1870–1924). He is the author of notable plays, such as the problem drama, *The Day of Reckoning* (1902), and the witty and timely social comedy, *The Fortunate Election* (1914); but his significance lies in his elegant and witty essays. He has written au-

thoritative and scholarly works of literary criticism, such as *Foreign Authors* and *Books and Pictures*, but his most admirable work is in the little *Epistles* (1903 et seq.), which disclose Holberg and Cervantes as his prototypes. They contain observations on the problems of the day, travel impressions, moods of nature, in which a warm feeling for nature struggles with his combative desire to be in opposition. From a decidedly conservative standpoint he commented wittily on the blunders of democracy, made sport of such a national problem as the temperance cause, and especially he wielded a keen sword in defense of the Riksmaal (Dano-Norwegian, the official language of Norway), in the use of which he was a master, against the victorious onward sweep of the Landsmaal (the new national language, based on Norwegian dialects), which was favored by the politicians.

3: SWEDEN

While Neo-Romanticism signifies in Denmark first and foremost a rediscovery of the soul, and in Norway a new nature poetry, in Sweden it is the memory of the past, particularly of the past of the Fatherland with its mighty figures, which brings about the revival after the brief reign of Naturalism.

The leader in this movement is VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM (born 1859). He is an aristocrat, belongs to a noble family, and has been able to lead a free and independent life. Because of his delicate health as a boy he spent most of the years of his earliest youth in long journeys to Rome and the

Selma Lagerlöf

Goodwin

Erik Axel Karlfeldt

Verner von Heidenstam

Orient. Later he lived in Paris, where he sought to educate himself to be a painter.

It was the strong impressions of this great world of beauty that led the young poet to raise the banner of revolt against utilitarian poetry in the richly varied collection of poems, *Pilgrimage and Wander-Years* (1888). The Orient of the *Arabian Nights* supplies the background; the content is an inspired glorification of beauty and happiness, and the flashing, colorful pictures which his verse painted in bold strokes acted as a direct challenge to the drab, everyday rationality and the dogmatic moral preaching of the time. Romanticism was risen again in all its glory; beauty, heroism, history were again placed in the seat of honor. His standpoint was supported on the theoretical side in the controversial writings, *Renascence* (1889) and *Pepita's Wedding* (1890), the latter written in collaboration with Oscar Levertin, which settled with "shoemaker realism" both in art and in philosophy.

At the same time Heidenstam turned his attention to the novel. *Endymion* (1889) pictures the Orient doomed to death in its encounter with Western civilization. What is significant in this novel is not the action, but the picturesque Eastern frame in which it is placed. The production of Heidenstam's youth is concluded in the long, fantastic novel, *Hans Alienus* (1892), a typical program work which often touches on allegory. It aims to show the development of a personality—that of the author himself—through all the various stages of life, which lead from the sensualism of antiquity up to an idealism reminiscent of Goethe and Schiller, in which beauty

becomes transcendent. The most personal note in this long book with its remarkable dream visions is the feeling of loneliness and homelessness which remains with the hero when his yearning for beauty has isolated him from the world. Hans Alienus does not attain to esthetic harmony; he has neglected his relation to the enduring forces of life, and he becomes, therefore, a dreamer and an eccentric.

Heidenstam finds release from the narrowness of individualism in the national concept, in the communal spirit. During the succeeding years he dedicates his art to the purpose of arousing the people by giving new life to their great memories of the past. His most important book, *Poems* (1895), marks the transition. It is the homecoming from the blazing Orient to Tiveden, the somber and rugged forest of his childhood. A life of gay epicureanism no longer suffices; in solitude he becomes aware of a tragi-religious feeling of the grandeur of death; battle and strife, courage and enthusiasm give life its true value.

It is for this reason that his historical tales, *The Charles Men* (*Karolinerna,* 1897–98), have become a tragic national epos. It is significant that these tales of the hero king, Charles XII, and his men deal not with victory and glory but with defeat and ruin. The King is the central figure, but the great suffering people—both those on the fields of battle and those in their homes in a poverty-stricken land—are the real heroes. The book therefore becomes a sublime picture of the struggle for the unattainable; of the heroism of purposeless sacrifice; of fulfillment of duty even unto death. The same

knightly and genuinely Swedish virtues to which Heidenstam does homage in *The Charles Men* are, in his poem cycle, *A People* (1902), held up as examples for the people of his own time, in his conviction of the educating and liberating significance of a great misfortune. The tales in *St. Göran and the Dragon* (1900) apply the same tragic standard to love, praising renunciation and faithfulness.

In the new century Heidenstam has drawn upon Sweden of the Middle Ages for his themes, as in the collection of tales, *The Forest Murmurs* (1904). In *Saint Birgitta's Pilgrimage* (1901) he has given an admirable picture of genius and its bitter lot on earth: to be obliged to sacrifice happiness for duty; to be strict toward oneself and strict toward others. And in *The Folkung Tree* which includes *Folke Filbyter* (1905) and *The Bjälbo Heritage* (1907), scholarship, imagination, and the plastic art of historical presentation have combined in the production of his second great epos. But back of the picture of medieval times in Sweden one glimpses a broader outlook on life than the merely national one; throughout the great work there runs a hymn to gentleness and goodness, to justice and order.

In his latest work, *New Poems* (1915), Heidenstam has attained that humanistic harmony which Hans Alienus sought in vain. His standpoint in these poems is one of wide-embracing moral idealism, positive in its teaching, and optimistic in its simple and pious faith in life. From his first gay and colorful book to the last earnest, puritanically simple collection of poems, Heidenstam has grown both as a writer and as a man. The Romanticist has become a

Classicist, and the tone of his writing has taken on a warmth and a clarified serenity which rightly lead one's thoughts to his great prototype, Goethe.

Heidenstam's friend and comrade in arms, the eminent literary critic OSCAR LEVERTIN (1862–1906), was the son of a Jewish art dealer, and even as a child he had a glowing passion for literature and art. J. P. Jacobsen was the ideal of his youth, and at the same time, in his literary research and his critical activities, he felt himself a disciple of Georg Brandes. His special domain was the Swedish rococo, the time of Gustav III, for which he aroused new interest. But of him, as of Brandes, it may be said that he has been more important as a critic than as a scholar. As a critic he ranks as Sweden's best in recent years; he was the discerning interpreter and influential spokesman of Neo-Romanticism. His excellent essays are wholly French in composition; the matter which lies before him is taken as the starting point for a general development and a discussion of principles. But his discernment had its limits. Gustav Fröding left him cold, and his judgements of Strindberg were always severe and seldom just. Among his critical works are *From the Days of Gustav III* (1897), *Poets and Dreamers* (1898) and *Swedish Figures* (1903).

Levertin made his literary début in the 80's with some collections of stories, *Small Change* (1883) and *Conflicts* (1885); he belonged at that time to Geijerstam's circle and was a zealous defender of Naturalism. It was through his acquaintance with Heidenstam that he first became clear as to his own

true characteristic attributes. The break with his earlier friends is marked by *Pepita's Wedding* (1890) and the novelette *Enemies of Life* (1891), which is of interest as a typical document in the literary controversy of the period; its chief character is the "decadent" young man, so familiar from contemporary French literature; the mood is one of world-weariness and ennui. But in the same year came a collection of poems, *Legends and Ballads* (1891), which was to give him a prominent place in the history of Neo-Romanticism. Before we stop to consider his poetry, which is the most important part of his creative writing, the rest of his prose works shall be mentioned: *Rococo Stories* (1899), fine and ably executed pasticcioes; *The Masters at Österås* (1900), picturing a University idyl in which men are bogged down—referring to Sweden and its isolation from the cultural currents of Europe; and finally a volume of posthumous *Last Stories.*

Levertin's exquisitely beautiful poetry is an accurate expression of his personality. It is, first of all, the poetry of a learned man, a connoisseur, and an art lover. It is often in the form of pasticcioes, new thoughts in old garments; or it is poetry in which the poet acts out a certain rôle, hiding himself behind the mask of a scribe, a monk, or a cavalier. Sometimes works of art, Holy Families after the manner of Memling, etc., are reproduced in words. It is, so to speak, art raised to the second power. Levertin always needs a certain point of departure, but he is far from giving a mere impersonal echo of another's work; the pictures he chooses become the bearers of his own thoughts. His masters

are the English Pre-Raphaelites; like them, he loves the poetry and the painting of the Middle Ages; his poetry is rich, artistic, occasionally almost overladen. In its seeking away from everyday life it is typical Romanticism.

In the second place, this scholar was a Jew. He was proud of his descent; he has written both about Shylock and about Ahasuerus, and the section entitled "Jewish Themes" in *Legends and Ballads* contains some of his most characteristic poetry. His Semitic origin has given to his writing its marked glowing fervor; it explains, too, the abrupt contrasts between renunciation and desire, between the Nirvana mood and the will to live, between skepticism and mystical belief.

And finally, he was a modern, brought up in skepticism and materialism, but capable, nevertheless—like Renan, who was one of his teachers—of dreaming himself into the pious mysticism of the Middle Ages. He is able to find expression for the burning conviction of Augustine; to paint the Holy Family or St. Cecilia among the singing angels, in the spirit of an old Italian master; to depict the warriors of Christ, the Dance of Death, and the Last Day with the imagination of a Dürer or a Holbein. It was in part the mystical piety of the Middle Ages, and in part their sensual-transcendental eroticism that captured his imagination.

This medieval mood is most evident in *Legends and Ballads*. The mood of the next collection, *New Poems* (1894), is clearer, more affirmative in its attitude toward life; the love poems bear witness to a new, more earthly love. A typical poem is that

about the foolish virgins of the Gospel, which extols the opulent and prodigal joy of life. Typical, too, is the splendid and profound Odysseus poem, *Ithaca,* which deals with the yearning away from life toward the unknown, toward the "vernal, white-blossomed Isle of Dreams."

Levertin's last two collections, *Poems* (1901) and *Last Poems,* are weaker in form and are marred by both metrical and stylistic deficiencies. They are virile and beautiful in thought, but the fundamental note is now one of weariness, longing for peace, renunciation of life. His last work, the poetic cycle, *King Solomon and Morolf* (1905), is a retelling of a familiar medieval legend. In it the poet has presented plastically the contrasts which conditioned his life and his art; the contrast between the skeptic and the man who takes an affirmative attitude toward life, between the Semitic and the Northern types of mind.

The master of the short story among the writers of the 90's is PER HALLSTRÖM (born 1866). He differs in several respects from the other great Neo-Romanticists. He was born in Stockholm, while the others came from the provinces; he is an engineer by profession, and as a young man he went to America, whence, like Hamsun, he returned disappointed. His literary sympathies are decidedly English; philosophically he is determined by Schopenhauer and Carlyle; the pessimism which one glimpses in the writings of Levertin and Fröding is, with Hallström, a conviction and a view of life. He is emphatically a man governed by his intelligence, a skeptic and a

critic, and he looks, therefore, with understanding at the defeated school of Naturalism; his descriptions of real life are adequate and often unimpassioned, and he is a master both of pathos tinged with indignation and of mordant ridicule. But at the same time he is a man of imagination who loves that which is distant in space and time, that which is strange and mysterious, the strong, dark colors. As an artist he is a questing spirit, a pronounced experimenter, and even though his writing bears traces of this—the lack of spontaneity sometimes makes it a bit dry and a bit tenuous—his striving in itself is always interesting. His serious theoretical reflections make him at the same time an important essayist and critic. In this connection one may mention such books as *Forms and Thoughts* (1910), *Living Poems* (1914) and *Art and Life* (1919).

Hallström has written poems, *Lyrics and Fantasies* (1891) and *The Woodland* (1904), but with all their beauty they lack the true lyric touch; and he has written plays which are interesting because of their ideas, but lacking in real dramatic life. The list of his plays includes *The Count of Antwerp* (1899), *Bianca Capello* (1900), *Two Legendary Dramas* (1908), *Two Saga Dramas* (1910), *Charles XI* (1918) and *Gustav III* (1918). His novels are fine, but they are without epic breadth. They include *An Old Story* (1895), which is charming, though sad; the period novels, *Spring* (1898) and *Gustaf Sparfvert's Romance* (1903); the Norrland story, *The Dead Waterfall* (1902), which contains some of his most beautiful descriptions of

nature; and the somewhat biting, tragi-comic Stockholm story, *A Rogue's Novel* (1906).

But in his short stories he reaches perfection. He made his first success with the collection *Stray Birds* (1894), stories about society's stepchildren. These stories already show his masterly ability to choose the psychologically significant point of departure which gives the short stories their deep perspectives. The fundamental mood is one of bitter humor and deep pessimism; but the author does not stand coldly aloof as a mere observer and reporter of his various "cases"; his contempt for the social order is combined with deep sympathy for the fate of the individual.

Hallström's emergence into Romanticism comes with *Purple* (1895). In this book there is an almost hectic joy in beauty; it revels in deep and glowing colors; the style is austere, and the themes are treated with an art which is exquisite and picturesquely historical. A masterpiece is the medieval story *The Falcon* with its mingling of beauty and horror. In this, and in several of the other stories, it is Death that gives the picture its true greatness; Death is the theme also of *The Diamond Brooch* in the collection bearing the same title and containing, among other things, some beautiful stories of antiquity. And Death is the chief character in the masterly stories collected under the title *Thanatos* (1900).

In these stories life is measured by the yardstick of death. The living are confronted with the great mystery in colorful pictures, sometimes drawn from

medieval Florence, as in *The Mystery* and *The Lion;* sometimes from the time of the Terror in France, as in *A Secret Idyl;* sometimes they picture scenes of the present day, in which the central figure may be a fat and somewhat tipsy commercial traveler on a coastal steamer, or a poor, debt-burdened squire on his last drive out into the snowstorm, as in *A Humble Tragedy* and *Melchior*. And everything is revalued from the standpoint of death. In *The Lion* the dominant idea of revenge becomes paltry and unimportant, while in *A Humble Tragedy,* on the other hand, that which is plain and ordinary is elevated and ennobled by death. In *Melchior* death is a release from poverty and disgrace; but in *A Secret Idyl* it is the background against which the true substance and value of life becomes apparent. Hallström has in these stories attained the simplicity and serenity of the great tragic style; they form a sublime expression of his outlook on life. In this connection his *Two Legendary Dramas* also are important. In *Alcestis* we have the tragedy of self-sacrifice, and in *Ahasuerus* the tragedy of egoism.

Also his other collections of short stories often revolve about the thought of death, self-immolation, and the obliteration of personality. The collections to which reference is made are *The Travel Book* (1898), *The Four Elements* (1906), *New Short Stories* (1912) and *Happenings* (1927). The broader and simpler narrative style of his last books bears witness that Hallström has learned from Selma Lagerlöf.

It is an evidence of the wide scope of his talent that the same writer whose thoughts again and again

are concerned with death has written also the sprightly, gay, and clever comedies, *A Venetian Comedy* (1901) and *Erotikon* (1908). Per Hallström is one of the most important and most interesting literary personalities of modern Sweden.

In the productive year of 1891, which brought the first poetic works of Levertin, Hallström, and Fröding, came the sensational début of Selma Lagerlöf with her most famous and most characteristic book, *Gösta Berling's Saga.*

Selma Lagerlöf was born in 1858 in Vermland on the estate known as Mårbacka, which she has described in her charming book about the home of her childhood, *Mårbacka* (1923). Her family has lived in Vermland for hundreds of years; she grew up with a feeling of reverence for the old-time memories of her native soil, its rich world of legend and strange adventure. Vermland was from olden times a little social world by itself, and in the manor where Selma Lagerlöf was born the tradition still lived of the gorgeously festive life led by a gay and brilliant upper class on the estates round about at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Selma Lagerlöf was filled with these accounts of the past, and as early as the first years of the 80's, when she was in Stockholm preparing herself for a teacher's examination, she busied herself with plans for combining the various separate stories into a long novel. But she was unable to find a suitable form for the work—for nothing was further from the sober, realistic literature of the day than these scenes of romantic joy of life and knightly chivalry. Not until

she gave up the attempt to adapt herself to the prevailing ideas of style and took her own inspiration as her sole guide did she succeed. The first fragments were published in 1890, and in 1891 came the long two-volume novel, which was to capture first Denmark, and then the rest of Europe, and which has been translated into twelve foreign languages.

Gösta Berling's Saga is a great modern epos; vast in scope, swarming with characters and episodes, with subsidiary plots which are but loosely connected with the main plot, but all of which capture the reader's interest. It tells of the joyous world of the wild cavaliers at Ekeby; an orgy of the joy of life and of romantic love-making in the midst of the beautiful scenery of Vermland. The action centers in the years of their reign on the estate, after its mighty ruler, the Major's lady, has been overthrown as the result of the slanders of the evil Sintram, and until the uprising of the masses again puts everything in its proper place. The style is lyrically stirring, with constant digressions and constant apostrophes to the author's audience, and, as in the epic of old, the boundary between the natural and the supernatural is always vague. The fairy tale breaks triumphantly through the realism of the day.

The fairy tale is Selma Lagerlöfs own peculiar world; it determines her psychology and her conception of life; its technique pops up in all of her books. To such an extent is it her individual form of expression that she has been obliged to employ it even in telling the story of her own development, in *A Saga About a Saga* (1908). Where she is at her best this fairy tale style is capable of putting things in a

new and truer light; it vivifies everything: animals, inanimate nature—everything thinks, speaks, and acts, and often the effect is great and surprisingly poetic. But it has its dangers; she makes use of the miracle as a moral and literary aid in season and out of season; she often cuts the knot with the aid of the supernatural; and the childish sentimentality of the fairy tale distorts her figures when she is dealing with complex and problematic characters.

The place which she had won for herself with *Gösta Berling* was made even more secure by the books which followed: the collections of short stories, *Invisible Links* (1894) and *The Queens of Kungahälla* (1899), the latter inspired by the Icelandic sagas; the fantastic novel of present-day Italy, *The Miracles of Antichrist* (1897), which attacks Socialism; and a feeling story of Vermland, *From a Swedish Homestead* (*En herrgårdssägen* 1899). A journey to Palestine prepared her for her next major work, and in 1901 came the long novel *Jerusalem*.

Jerusalem pictures a religious movement among the peasants of Dalecarlia which results in a group of families emigrating to the Holy Land for the purpose of founding a colony there. The first volume is the most important with its magnificent and monumental picture of an old peasant race and its world of ideas. But here again everything, both nature and man, is seen in the light of the fairy tale or legend; the action is a succession of portents and miracles.

Selma Lagerlöf's imagination and her inventiveness were made to serve a pedagogical purpose when, under the title *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*

(*Nils Holgerssons underbara resa,* 1906–1907), she wrote a masterly popular fairy tale book about Sweden's scenic beauty and her memories of the past. The book is characteristic, too, of her moral optimism, which comes strongly to the fore after *Gösta Berling's Saga* and which aims to teach men goodness and love, charity and compassion. Her faith is often warm and deep, but at times it strikes one as rather cheap and uncritical.

Selma Lagerlöf's unbounded popularity brought her the Nobel Prize in 1909, an honor which has fallen to Sweden only upon one other occasion, when it was awarded to Heidenstam in 1916. It brought her also a seat in the Swedish Academy in 1914. But her art has lacked the ability to renew itself and has, therefore, gradually hardened into mannerism. There is mannerism already in the weird sixteenth-century murder story, *The Treasure* (*Hr. Arnes Pengar,* 1904), and it is seen to an even greater degree in her later books, though several of them, as *The Emperor of Portugallia* (1914), contain many fine and touching scenes, and some of them, as *The Driver* (1912), afford glimpses of strong and imaginative feeling. But her lack of regard for reality brings its own retribution—as is the case in *The Outcast* (1918), where her purpose, the denunciation of the horror of war, is counteracted by the improbability of the plot; and when she turns back to the Vermland of *Gösta Berling,* as she has done in *Liliecrona's Home* (1911), *The General's Ring* (*Löwensköldska Ringen,* 1925) and *Charlotte Löwensköld* (1925), one finds that the theme has been exhausted.

But by virtue of *Gösta Berling's Saga, Jerusalem, The Adventures of Nils* and the charming *Christ Legends* (1904) her vigorous and original narrative talent, her vivid and inventive imagination, and her amiable attitude toward mankind will live in Swedish literature.

Pure poetry is represented by two great names: Gustav Fröding and Erik Axel Karlfeldt.

Like Sweden's great Romanticists, Esaias Tegnér, E. G. Geijer, and Selma Lagerlöf, GUSTAF FRÖDING (1860–1911) was born in Vermland. His father owned a manorial estate close to Karlstad, and his mother was the daughter of a bishop. Both parents were highly gifted, but both showed marked tendencies toward insanity, a circumstance which foreshadowed the sad fate of their son. Fröding became a student at Uppsala, where he absorbed the radical ideas of the 80's; he was gay and idle, took no examinations, and in 1885 he returned home to Vermland to become a journalist in Karlstad.

From time to time one might read in the *Karlstadstidningen* a poem from his pen, but he had not yet struck his own peculiar note. He was a dreamer, but he wished to be a liberal-minded journalist; he felt the impulse to sing in a quite different manner, but the time did not seem to be propitious for song. It was the example of Heidenstam in *Pilgrimage and Wander-Years* which gave him courage to write and freed him from his dependence upon "photographic realism." He had his say about Naturalism in two small essays, *Naturalism and Romanticism* (1890) and *On Humor* (1890). As

against the one-sided moralizing tendency of Naturalism, he maintained that art is an end in itself; while in answer to Naturalism's claim of fidelity to real life, he pointed out the rôle that imagination and intuition, in spite of all theories, played for example in the work of Zola. In 1891 he made his poetic début with the collection of poems, *Guitar and Concertina.*

In their enthusiasm over the brilliant and contagious humor, which was the chief impression obtained from this remarkable book, his contemporaries quite overlooked the note of sadness and melancholy which is found in some of the poems. This was a new domain for poetry: Vermland types from town and countryside, such as the two obstinate peasants, Jan Ersa and Per Persa, or merry Stina Stursk, or plodding Lars of Kuja, or Jonte and Brunte, the parson's old man-servant and his horse; or the fat Dean, the Lieutenant with his white waistcoat, the militia on their way to the maneuvers, etc. And it was a new artistry: terse, clear-cut, with no superfluous words and no uncertainty in composition, and with it all a musical virtuosity in rhythm and rhyme which has scarcely been surpassed by any other Northern poet. Excellent examples are the girl cowherd's song in the pastoral, *Vall'arelåt,* the peasant ball in *They Danced by the Roadside* and others.

His next volume, *New Poems* (1894), is even more excellent. Here Fröding's art is completely emancipated in the long "epic," *The Dance,* in which the shy journalist dreams himself and the provincial town's fêted ballroom queen all the way into

Heaven; also in the merry verses of *Mountain Troll,* which is, rhythmically considered, a unique bit of virtuosity. Here we find also pictures from the life of the people, such as *The Prayer Meeting* describing a pious assemblage, and *In Choice and Anguish* (*I valet och kvalet*), in which a peasant girl falters in her choice between the rich widower and her sweetheart in America. But the serious poems are considerably more somber in tone. There are such poems as the *Biblical Fantasies,* in which Adam and Eve, Samson and the Preacher, Saul and David, all become expressions of the dark depths of Fröding's own soul; there is the poem *Atlantis,* with its mood of ruin and annihilation; and there is *Wennerbom, the Bard* with cutting irony in its picture of the fallen genius.

The culmination was reached in *Splashes and Rags* (1896). Insanity, which had previously threatened, now showed itself in earnest; the bow was bent so strongly that it had to break. This is the most personal and most affecting of Fröding's books. The old gayety is still to be met with in the amusing children's poems about *Little Joe-Johnny* (*Lelle Karl-Johan*) and about the little girls, Elsa and Greta, in *Raiders.* What is new in the book is partly in the form of Nietzschean superman fantasies, partly erotic poems, such as *A Morning Dream* and *The Gods Dance,* poems of such naked, pagan beauty that the author was prosecuted for immorality because of them, and finally certain harrowing personal confessions filled with self-accusations. Examples of the last mentioned type are *The Girl in My Eye* and *Narcissus.* One hears the sob of hopeless despair in

Outlawed where the poet dreams that he is a poor, starving, lonely vagabond; in *Prince Aladdin of the Lamp* where the prince of the fairy tale has gone mad because of the loss of his lamp and his ring—his creative power and the ability to believe; and in the coal-black *The Way of the World,* where the ship calmly sails on without paying any attention to the shrieks of the drowning. In *The Grail Saga* a diseased mind seeks to find a mystical reconciliation of life's contradictions, to find peace beyond good and evil.

This Grail philosophy, a sort of religious Spinozaism, occupies the succeeding collections of poems, *New and Old* (1897) and *Grail Splashes* (1898), which bear distinct traces of the rapid development of his disease. From and including 1898 Fröding was completely insane; only in the last four years of his life did his mind begin to clear; but he never was himself again. His later books, *Gleanings* (1910) and *Reconvalescentia* (1913), are merely a weak and ineffective echo of the glorious music of his youth.

In all three Northern lands, Fröding's significance for the period in which he lived has been greater than that of any other poet of the 90's. His poems have been read, set to music and sung, loved and discussed as but few others; his tragic fate has been a constant spur to the imagination and insight of the critics. He is a poet both for the many and for the few. His art is to clear and so facile that it can be understood by the least sophisticated; it seems to have had its origin in play, but back of it lies heavy, heroic work and a struggle to hide

his melancholy behind a smile, as in *From the Anabasis*. The two volumes of *Collected Poems* (1901), which give the quintessence of his poetry, include an astonishing variety: the Vermland types; the pasticcioes, in which he shows his unique ability to live himself into the modes of thought and expression of times past; the purely objective occasional poems such as the portrait of Tegnér in *His Grace the Bishop of Vexiö;* and the purely subjective feeling in such lightly breathed outbursts as *Sigh, Sigh, Rushes!* and *There Should Have Been Stars.* He is able to paint the clear, sunny reality of Vermland, as in *Three Caroling Girls,* and to dream of distant, happy fairy tale worlds, as in *A Morning Dream.* The unity in this variety lies in the rich soul of the poet, and the tragedy in his art lies in the victory of darkness and melancholy over one who was able to sing the praise of happiness and joy so sweetly and lightsomely that none other could equal him.

Just as Selma Lagerlöf and Fröding are Vermland's creative writers, so ERIK AXEL KARLFELDT (born 1864) is the singer of Dalecarlia. His production is sparing, but weighty; it consists of six volumes of poems: *Songs of the Wilderness and of Love* (1895); *Fridolin's Songs* (1898); *Fridolin's Pleasure Garden and Dalecarlian Paintings in Rhyme* (1901); *Flora and Pomona* (1906); *Flora and Bellona* (1918) and *Horn of Autumn* (1927).

Karlfeldt is a lyricist only, and his greatness is due in no small measure to the fact that he is well aware of his limitations and nearly always heeds them. He is a native of Dalecarlia, coming from an

old peasant family, and nearly all of his best poetry is dedicated to the glorification of the scenery of that region, the life of its people, its traditions and its history. Dalecarlia is not only one of Sweden's most beautiful districts; but its proud peasant population, which has played an important rôle in the history of the kingdom, particularly in the fights for liberty waged against the Danes at the beginning of the sixteenth century, has preserved even to the present time its distinctive culture, its local costumes, and its popular art. There is a certain Old-Swedish vigor, steadfastness, and solidity about the peasants and mine workers of this region, and they are, in the best sense of the term, bound to the soil, and these good qualities are found also in Karlfeldt's poetry. His art is objective, almost impersonal. He is able to conjure himself into the peasant's and the hunter's train of thought concerning life and death; he is able with pithy humor to put old peasant practices and old peasant wisdom into rhyme; his feeling for nature, at once primitive and refined, is determined by the fact that he is deeply rooted in his native soil, and as a portrayer of landscape he is perhaps the greatest of the Swedish poets. His familiarity with the pictorial art of the people is displayed in *Dalecarlian Paintings in Rhyme,* in which scenes from Biblical history, such as the Garden of Eden, Jonah's Sea Voyage, the Translation of Elijah, the Virgin Mary, and the Judgement Day, are treated in the same naïve style as that created by the old peasant painters when they pictured Biblical figures in local surroundings and Swedish costumes; and the result is a remark-

ably brilliant mingling of burlesque humor and refined delicacy or magnificent pathos.

Karlfeldt prefers to disguise himself as the worthy bachelor, Fridolin, who is at home both in the company of the learned and among the peasants; for deep within himself the poet feels himself a stranger in his old home. It is precisely for this reason that his feeling of affection is so profound; the memory of the lost idyl has given his pictures of the country and its people their warmth, their brilliance, and their classical harmony.

Karlfeldt's style is plastic and firm. His language excels in sonorous and unusual, but precise words; his strophes are artistic in form and greatly varied. It is poetry that is at the same time popular and learned; one notes amusing influences from the bucolic poetry of antiquity. Because of his classical learning, his old-fashioned mode of speech, and his train of thought focussed upon the greatness of Sweden, Karlfeldt reminds one of the Renaissance poetry of Sweden. And yet, one notes, especially in his nature pictures, the modern mind with its restlessness and longing. This is particularly true of his three last volumes of poetry, in which even his themes are sought outside the crown land of his poetry, Dalecarlia.

The impression of Swedish literature in the 90's is completely dominated by the "big six." Of the other writers one may mention three painters: Ernst Josephson (1851–1906), who published two notable collections of poetry; Pelle Molin (1864–1896), who won lasting fame by his freshly

vigorous Norrland sketches, *The Romance of Ådalen,* published in 1897; and finally, the great caricaturist, ALBERT ENGSTRÖM (born 1869), who has written classic interpretations of the life of the people. Outside the realm of *belles lettres,* the social philosopher, ELLEN KEY (1849–1926), has won European renown as a champion of Individualism.

NEW CURRENTS

1900–1914

IV

NEW CURRENTS 1900–1914

THE period between the turn of the century and the outbreak of the World War gives a more complex and varied impression than does the foregoing decade. There is no dominant stylistic tendency; various currents are in conflict with each other; but in general one may speak, nevertheless, of a reaction against the trend of the 90's.

A characteristic feature is the prominent rôle played by literature of the soil. Literature about peasants is now often written by the peasants themselves, and frequently the writing is done in the dialect of the author's home district. Pictures of peasant and proletarian life again take on—as they did in the 80's—a social aspect; and alongside of a renewed debating of problems, one notes, both in the novel and in the drama, a predilection for psychological realism. At the same time, the poets are reacting against the introspective ego-writing so characteristic of the Symbolist movement; their tone is becoming fuller and more vigorous; their themes are larger and more comprehensive than before.

The years preceding the great war were—more particularly perhaps in Denmark—an important and significant period which brought new values to literature. But it is scarcely yet possible to undertake a

valid appraisal of this period. The number of authors is constantly increasing, so that a selection must be more arbitrary than before; and even though it is easy to point out certain unquestionably leading figures, several of these are still in the midst of their development, and any judgement concerning them will be subject to revision upon conclusive points. This period must then of necessity be treated in a more summary manner than has been the case in the preceding chapters.

I: DENMARK

The central figure in Danish literature since the turn of the century is JOHANNES V. JENSEN (born 1873). He is a Jutlander, from West Himmerland, where, according to tradition, the Cimbrians of old originated; his father was a veterinary surgeon, his grandfather a weaver, and his ancestors were peasants. This desolate region with its old-fashioned peasant population has been an important factor not only in his writing but also in shaping his views of life. Strongly influenced by Johannes Jörgensen, he wrote his first immature but interesting novels, *Danes* (1896) and *Einar Elkær* (1898), both typical of the 90's and stamped with decadent self-contemplation. But between these two books came his first journey to America, which turned his eyes outward, and *Einar Elkær* is, at the same time, a reckoning with the school to which the author had previously belonged. A new vigor is noted in the excellent *Himmerland Stories,* the first volume of which appeared about this time, followed by later

collections in 1904 and 1910. In these stories Johannes V. Jensen takes authoritative possession of his native soil, showing himself to be equally pre-eminent in picturing the past and present, nature and the life of the people, as a master equally of humor and of tragedy.

From the picturing of peasant life in Jutland, Jensen now went further afield in his choice of themes. He glorifies the age of progress and machinery in a volume of short stories entitled *Intermezzo* (1899) and in the philosophical travel book *The Gothic Renaissance* (1900). The last mentioned characteristic work brings to the fore his race theory, which is to become the main theme of his later writing. This theory seeks to establish for the Gothic race (i. e., the Jutlanders, the English, and the Americans) the place of leadership in historical development, up to its triumph in modern civilization. Modern technology, outdoor life, and Darwin's theory of evolution become new and powerful sources of inspiration for this writer.

Thus his greatest artistic achievement, *The Fall of the King* (1900–01), the profound historical novel about the unfortunate Renaissance king, Christian II, becomes a link in the brilliantly conceived history of the Gothic race, which he wrote in the *The Long Journey;* while his great picture of modern America in the dual novel, *Madame d'Ora* and *The Wheel* (1904–05) may be considered as the concluding link in the same cycle. The two last are a curious mingling of brilliant details and rather traditional detective story effects.

Before the ambitious plan of *The Long Journey*

was carried into execution, Jensen recorded his impressions of the Far East and of America in a few small books: *The Forests* (1904), *Singapore Stories* (1907), and *Little Ahasuerus* (1909). In these his talent for describing nature shows a steady growth. His main interest, however, was centering more and more in the great racial epic. *The Glacier* (1909) was the opening book of the series proper, which includes, in the order of their contents, the volumes: *The Lost Land* (1919), *The Glacier* (translated with *The Lost Land* under the common title *Fire and Ice*); *Norn Guest* (1919), *The Trek of the Cimbri* (1922), *The Ship* (1912), and *Christopher Columbus* (1921). The idea of this great work seems—as for example in the case of Balzac—to have developed gradually, a fact which explains the contradictions in it; the author has himself given a complete explanation of its train of thought and its purpose in the treatise *Esthetics and Evolution* (1922). These novels, which have made Johannes V. Jensen famous, present a curious mingling of evolutionary lore, nature pictures, and purely poetic imagination, in which man is followed from the Ice Age, through the tribal migrations and the Viking period, down to the discovery of America. They are carried by a magnificently conceived purpose, a bewildering imagination, and a richly varied style; but at times they are uneven and disconnected.

Even finer examples of the author's narrative talent are found in the five collections of *Myths* (1907–24). These are nature pictures, instinct with feeling, short pithy stories, thoughtful fairy tales that may be compared for originality with those of

Hans Christian Andersen. Of great distinction is also the novel *Jörgine* (1926), a beautiful story of the soil, which in the description of milieu forms a continuation of the Himmerland stories.

The remainder of Johannes V. Jensen's work includes three very important collections of poetry: *Poems* (1906), *The Seasons* (1923), and *The Light of the World* (1926), which, like his prose writings, have founded a school. It includes also various collections of essays containing original observations on nature, civilization, and art: *The New World* (1907), *The Northern Mind* (1912), *Introduction to Our Age* (1915) and others, together with a characteristic book on Kipling.

Since 1900 Johannes V. Jensen has been and he is still the leading figure in Danish literature, and his significance for the younger generation has not yet been estimated. He has had many imitators both in the North and in Germany. He has learned from Hans Christian Andersen and from Hamsun, from Kipling and Walt Whitman, but he remains himself throughout, both in thought and in style. His philosophy builds faithfully on Darwin's theory of evolution, as may be seen in *Evolution and Morality* (1925) and in the beautiful zoological descriptions in *The Metamorphosis of the Animals* (1927), and while it may be a bit paradoxical, it has, in any case, been a powerful impulse to his creative imagination.

This imagination is wholly original, mystically creative, and it is equally at home in the past and in the present, in the forests of the East and in the great cities of America. His style, by which he

is able in the most wonderful manner to present the thing itself, to create the impression of living reality, has had a freshly formative influence both in prose and in verse and is often imitated. He attains his greatest heights in the short story or in the lyric poem; in these, a page or two or a few strophes seem to present the quintessence of his poetic genius. In his long novels it is as though the swarming multitude of his fancies breaks all bounds.

Johannes V. Jensen was the leader of the "Jutland movement," which, through its revolt against the cultural autocracy of Copenhagen, brought about a revival in Danish literature about the year 1900. A typical Jutlander is also JAKOB KNUDSEN (1858–1917). His brilliant pictures of peasant life place him among the writers of the soil, but his horizon is far wider than such a classification would imply, and the important thing for him is not the firm realism of his peasant types, his clergymen, and his Folk High School teachers, but the discussion of philosophical and religious problems, which forms the essence of his work. He is not only the most important novelist of his generation and, generally speaking, one of the leading figures in modern Danish literature, but he is at the same time an original and influential religious thinker.

Jakob Knudsen developed late, and his literary career did not begin in earnest until he was forty years old. He began as a teacher in a Folk High School, and he continued to view with sympathy the great Folk High School idea of Grundtvig, even though he sharply criticized the latter's disciples.

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JOHANNES V. JENSEN

Subsequently he became a clergyman, but during the last twenty years of his life he made his living by lecturing and writing.

In his earlier works he appears to be groping, although the interesting play *Cromwell's Daughter* (1891) and more especially the story *A Re-encounter* (1898) give a foretaste of the Knudsen of later years. His first decisive success came with *The Old Parson* (1899), which made a great stir because of its energetic and paradoxical conclusions concerning social morality on the one hand and obedience to the dictates of conscience on the other. Long novels now followed one another in rapid succession. They include the educational novel, *Ferment*, and *Clarification* (1902), perhaps his chief work, which pictures the intellectual situation of his generation and forms a counterpart to Pontoppidan's *Lucky Per; Grit* (1903), his most completely artistic book, in which the chief character is a Jutland peasant who, with the bluntness of a Michael Kohlhaas, stands up for his rights in the face of the encroachments of those in authority; *Inger* (1906), a novel of married life; and the two bitter social novels, *Progress* (1907), which contrasts the old peasant culture with the new-fashioned strivings for reform, and *Schoolmaster Urup* (1909), which scoffs at the modern lenience toward criminals and at modern pedagogical ideas. A book without any avowed moral or social purpose is *Two Generations* (1910), which presents a cultural and historical picture from the middle of the nineteenth century based upon family recollections. The profoundest expression of his strong and characteristic

conception of life is given in *Firmly Rooted* (1911), which, because of the idea upon which it is based, occupies a central position in his literary work; and the dual novel *Fear* (1912) and *Courage* (1914), picturing the religious development of Luther—and incidentally of Knudsen himself. An important book for the understanding of the ideal world of his novels is the collection of essays, *Philosophy of Life.*

Finally, the excellent collections of short stories, *Jutlanders* I–II (1915 et seq.), show his greatness also in the "lesser" format.

Jakob Knudsen's rich artistry encompasses such widely differing moods as sly humor, mordant ridicule, and sublime pathos. The presentation is distinctly subjective; he lives wholly with those of his characters who share his opinions and overwhelms their opponents with crushing scorn. For this reason, his psychology is often patently vulnerable; he feels himself under no obligation to photographic realism. But he is a master in establishing in a striking manner the characteristic traits of his figures, and he understands how to concentrate the action with a sure and clever touch in great, unforgettable scenes. If the composition of his books is sometimes uneven, his descriptive power and the paradoxical keenness with which he presents his problems serve to cover up all his deficiencies.

His books concern themselves with burning problems of life in general as well as of religion; in them one finds direct action and controversy, carried by his firm and authoritative convictions. Their fascination for the reader is due in no small degree to

their curious mingling of barbaric sternness and gentle forbearance, of firmness and, on the other hand, weakness. In his pictures of peasant life he champions the original inherited culture as against all liberal imbecility and democratic blundering, and he stands his ground against most of the new currents. A characteristic feature of his religious thinking is the sharp distinction between social and religious morality, between man's imperfection and the perfect commandments of God. The goal that he sets is to be wholly in the world and at the same time to be firmly rooted in God, to rest secure in a good conscience, freed from temporal things in spite of defilement and sin. Jakob Knudsen is a dualist, but his dualism encompasses a "both—and," not, as the Church customarily does, an "either—or."

Jutland's most typical representatives in the literature of the soil are Johan Skjoldborg and Jeppe Aakjær. JOHAN SKJOLDBORG (born 1861), is the son of a crofter from Thy, and *A Fighter* (1896), the book which first brought him recognition, pictures with deep admiration the stubborn, energetic battle for existence of a poor crofter in the dunes. The trend in Skjoldborg's first books is decidedly toward the consideration of social problems, but the presentation is completely unpartisan. His chief work is *Gyldholm* (1902), which captured for its author the literary public. Here the writer portrays in gloomy pictures of a strongly agitatorial effect the material and mental misery and subjection of the laborers on the great manorial estates.

After a succession of popular novels, short stories,

and plays, Skjoldborg won a new literary success with the story, *New Men* (1917). Previously, in *The Crows' House* (1899), he had placed the old-fashioned drudge and the modern man of progress in opposition to each other, with most of his sympathy for the latter. But times have changed; now that which is old is represented by the peasant, who is wholly absorbed in community interests, in co-operative enterprises, and in county politics, while his son, the "new man," who is close to the author's heart, fights for a richer humanity against the materialism of reform, and for the rights of the individual and of the home against the claims of the community. In the same spirit are *Jens Jakob's Sons* (1920), *The Parson at Lögum* (1921–22), in which the chief character is an incarnation of Skjoldborg's ideal man, and the beautiful play *The Race* (1925).

Skjoldborg's special domain is Hanherred in Thy and its inhabitants, both the poor people of the dunes toward the North Sea and the solid farmers on the more fertile acres toward the Limfjord. It is his rare ability to picture both nature and men that makes his art so genuine and reliable; his narrative has the matter-of-fact calm and the clear view of his subject that is characteristic of the true epic writer, and there is a real saga-like quality in his tersely firm style. His art is placed at the service of an idea; he always desires to teach or to present an example. But the purpose in his books arises naturally out of the events described; anything that is artificial or arranged to order is foreign to him, and his keen sense of justice makes it possible for him to dis-

tribute sunshine and storm with impartial hand and honestly to let each standpoint have its due. A broad understanding, a rich humanity, and a firm faith in life are the forces that determine his work.

JEPPE AAKJÆR (born 1866) is the lyric poet among the writers of the soil. He hails from the south of the Limfjord, is the son of a farmer, and comes from a poor and hard-working family. As a boy he was fond of reading and showed unusual intelligence. After many struggles, he succeeded in passing the entrance examinations to the University at the age of twenty-eight. After supporting himself for some years as a lecturer and journalist, he acquired, at the beginning of the century, the farm Jenle on the peninsula of Salling, and since that time he has looked after his agricultural interests, while at the same time diligently carrying on his literary work.

His writing is distinctly local and colored by his social views. Politically he is an extreme progressivist; his violent agitatorial trend is evident particularly in his novels, *The Peasant's Son* (1899), *The Children of Wrath* (1904), and *Pension* (1907), where it often mars the objectivity of the picture; it is found occasionally in his short stories, the best of which, however, are distinguished by their feeling and their bold humor. But at the same time he is extremely conservative with regard to the memories of his native district, its scenery, and especially its speech. In connection with his conservative attitude toward the natural scenic features of the

countryside, it may be mentioned that he has sought to guard its heaths against cultivation and planting which has gradually converted the Jutland heaths into farming land. Aakjær is an out and out Jutlander. He has written a long biography of Jutland's greatest writer, Steen Steensen Blicher, has gathered about him a group of Jutland writers for the publication of an annual, has published a valuable anthology of literature in the language of the people, and has himself written in dialect a succession of his best poems besides some charming short stories.

But it is first and foremost to his lyrics that Aakjær owes his place among the great writers. His poetical works include several collections among which *Songs of the Rye* (1906) is best known. *Heimdal's Wanderings* (1924) is a longer narrative poem. He has learned from Blicher and from Burns, but his work is highly original. There is open air and lofty sky in his poetry. The fullness of the soil is in his calm, broad rhythms and in his vigorous, pithy speech. The scenery of Jutland is presented in great plastic pictures; the brown heath, the sluggishly flowing river, and the broad hills clothed in growing grain. Aakjær follows the peasant on Sundays and week days, in jest and earnest, pictures him in the toil of springtime, the hope of summer, and the proud joy of harvest time. Not least important in his production are the dialect poems, which interpret in a masterly manner both dry humor and subdued resignation. The poet's singable verse has tempted many composers. Aakjær is rightfully not only the favorite poet of his own district, but he is one of the most widely read and

admired in the rest of Denmark. While his art is able to center itself with wonderfully beautiful effects in the memories of his childhood home, his emotions are capable of expanding to embrace the entire people—both its present and the treasures of its past. His domain extends from his mother's distaff to the mighty picture of Denmark contained in the songs of the Fatherland.

Among the other interpreters of peasant life in Jutland, two are especially worthy of notice: MARIE BREGENDAHL (born 1867) and HARRY SÖIBERG (born 1880). Marie Bregendahl's chief work is *Pictures of Life Among the People of Södal* (1914–23) in seven volumes, a series of excellent stories which bear witness to a great heart and much understanding of human nature. The much younger Söiberg has presented, in his monumental novel trilogy, *The Land of the Living* (1916–20) a moving and broadly conceived picture of the religious controversies in a region of Western Jutland; by reason both of its artistry and its psychology it is one of the most important works of modern Danish literature. In *The Sea King* (1926), this author began a new series of novels, of which, up to the present writing, only one volume has appeared.

The island of Bornholm has its own literary celebrity in MARTIN ANDERSEN NEXÖ. Just as Aakjær and Skjoldborg are the interpreters of the peasants, so Nexö is the interpreter of the workers and the proletariat. He was born in Copenhagen in ex-

tremely poor circumstances. At the age of nine he removed with his parents to the rocky island of Bornholm, his father's birthplace, where, after his confirmation, he had to fight his way up as a herds-boy, a shoemaker's apprentice, and later as a hod-carrier. It was here that his deep understanding of the misery of the poor and the injustice of the social order was awakened. After some years of his youth had been passed in such arduous toil, he was enabled to attend the Folk High School at Askov, where his eyes were opened to a new and brighter world. Here he found people who understood him and who helped him on his way.

His first collection of short stories, *Shadows* (1898), comprises, in part, pictures from the South —Nexö had visited Spain and Italy in 1894—and, in part, excellent Bornholm sketches, in which the social trend is already noticeable. He attracted attention by several novels, including *The Frank Family* (1901), a picture of life among the people of Bornholm, and the crassly naturalistic and darkly pessimistic *Drizzle* (1902); and he published several short story collections which showed talent and whose subjects were taken as a rule from the lives of the workers and fisherfolk of Bornholm; but his decisive success came with the first volume of *Pelle the Conqueror* (I–IV, 1906–10).

In this long novel, which has brought its author international renown, he has pictured, by means of a typical example, "the worker as he fares far and wide over the earth on his endless, half unconscious wandering toward the light." His hero lives through the victorious development of the Danish labor

movement during the last decades of the nineteenth century. There is a sprinkling of agitation in the later volumes, and the author's theoretical observations are rather too much in evidence; artistically, the first two volumes stand highest. The first is a wonderful picture of Pelle's childhood in the Stone House on Bornholm; the relationship between the boy and his old father, the poor Swedish herdsman, Lasse, is beautifully drawn. The second volume contains amusing and lifelike situations and types from Pelle's year of apprenticeship in the strait-laced little provincial town on Bornholm.

His second major work, which, however, does not equal *Pelle the Conqueror,* is *Ditte: Daughter of Man* (1917–21), a sad and touching story about a little servant girl's lot from the cradle to the grave. Here again it is in the pictures of childhood —the first two volumes of the novel—that the work reaches its greatest heights.

After the Russian Revolution, Nexö, who had previously taken his stand with the left wing of the Social Democrats, went over to the Communists; his controversial volume of short stories, *The Passengers of the Empty Seats* (1921), is dedicated to the Russian people, and in *Toward Dawn* (1923) he has given an enthusiastic account of his journey to Soviet Russia.

There is propaganda in his writing, but he is too superior a mind to give way to the common demagogic distribution of black and white in his descriptions of men and women. His social tendency is supported by a glowing optimism, a fundamental belief in the original good in man which shall, with un-

failing certainty, prepare the way for justice and happiness. And although his art does not shrink from scenes of crude naturalism, its proper domain is the brightly idyllic, and he is at his best in his descriptions of children and the aged.

The Sealander, Knud Hjortö (born 1869), is the son of a peasant and comes of an old peasant family, and he has written excellent books of his native soil such as *In the Home Neighborhood* (1901), *Rasmus* (1909) and *Within and Without the Parish* (1919). But his real contribution to literature lies in another domain, that of the psychological and philosophical novel. There is something dry and colorless about his pictures of people, and at the same time something keen and penetrating. He studies his subjects thoroughly, spies out their little decisive psychological traits—his figures of women are especially significant—and he is a keen observer, particularly in the domain of speech; not the slightest nuance escapes his ear, and he understands to perfection how to reproduce the speech, especially of women and children. His style is genuine, virile, and terse; it has the effect of a conscious reaction against the lyrical prose of J. P. Jacobsen.

Knud Hjortö's literary production has been voluminous, but it is difficult to approach. The easiest of his books to read are the satirical real life pictures, *People* (1903), and the self-ironical confession novel, *Green Youth and Gray Souls* (1911) with its amusing and charming descriptions of flappers. His chief works are the trilogy comprising *Dust and Stars* (1904), *Two Worlds* (1905) and

Hans Raaskov (1906), which are novels respectively of the imagination, of pure intelligence, and of passionate will; and *Faust* (1921), a philosophical fantasy on the endless repetition of existence and on the terror in the thought of eternity. Hjortö is a deep-searching dialectician, whose energetic logic pursues thoughts out to their uttermost consequences; his entire body of work is a debate, whose fundamental problem is human happiness.

A fine and distinctive novelist is OTTO RUNG (born 1874). His highly complex art is related to that of the English-American novel. He is an aristocrat by temperament, the reverse of popular in style and in choice of subjects.

He seeks, therefore, by preference that which is foreign and distant, that which is unusual and odd, as in the group of stories, *The White Yacht* (1906), and in the novels, *Shadows That Pass* (1909) and *The Great Caravan* (1914); and when he chooses what appear to be quite real themes of his own time and his own country, such as the critical years after 1908 in *The Private Chamber* (1912), the golden "Gründer" period during the World War in *The Bird of Paradise* (1919), and the great financial panic which followed, in *When the Waters Sank* (1922), then even that which is known and familiar is completely transformed by his imagination and takes on a new freshness through his characteristic style.

Sometimes his interest is captured by the individual characters and their problems, as in *The Inevitable* (1902) and *The Last Battle* (1904); sometimes it

is the milieu that engages him, as in his splendi
picture of the old court-house quarter in Copenhage
with its gallery of queer and suspicious types in *Th*
Bird of Paradise, and of the harbor quarter, Ny
havn, in *When the Waters Sank.* Occasionally hi
bent for theoretical argumentation and philosoph
ical discussion comes to the fore, as in *The Whit*
Yacht and in the weighty play, *Color Guard* (1918)
But everywhere these various tendencies are met b
the true novelist's need for action and suspense. Hi
books are rich in strong and surprising effects, an
in *The Long Night* (1913) he has created a typica
and distinguished example of the true novel of ac
tion.

The highest points in his writing are *Shadow*
That Pass, terse and all of one piece as regard
both form and content; and *The Bird of Paradise*
a novel broadly planned and rich in episode.

The line from J. P. Jacobsen is continued and con
cluded by HARALD KIDDE (1878–1918). He re
sembles Jacobsen in his penetrating psychology an
his thorough understanding of people who thin
differently from himself, in his sympathy with thos
who suffer and in his solemn, ponderous style. Bu
his problems lie in a different direction.

Kidde began his literary career with a little vol
ume of parables entitled *Emblems* (1900). Tw
years later came his first long work, *Aage and Els*
(1902–03). The theme is taken from the Danis
folk ballad which has given the novel its name—
the ballad of the dead knight who is called bac
to life by the grief of his beloved, but whom lif

cannot hold. Kidde has aimed to picture the victory of death over life and the triumph of life through death. The chief character, Tue Tavsen, an over-sensitive hypochondriac, sees all his loved ones die one after another; he has within him a strong urge to live, but he feels himself doomed to renounce life, to isolate himself in his own egotism. His childhood sweetheart, the wholesome and energetic Lull Wedén, wishes to arouse his desire for life, to take up the battle with the dead, but she is not successful. He is wholly given over to melancholy.

A new volume of prose poems, *Air Castles* (1904), and the novels, *The Blind* (1906) and *The Law* (1908), take up the idea of unmerited suffering and its educative significance both for the sufferer himself and for the world about him. More optimistic are *The Other* (1909) and *The Blessed* (1910). In these the miracle of love is victorious over the evil powers of life; by the religious note in their trend of thought they form the transition to Kidde's chief work, *The Hero* (1912).

As a young man Kidde had given up the study of theology and had, influenced as he was by the writings of Sören Kierkegaard, withdrawn from the Church. But his constant living interest in the problem of religion and his profound reverence for true Christianity made it possible for him to picture in a convincing manner a true Christian life. The hero is a poor and humble teacher on a lonely island—Anholt in the Cattegat—whose resigned and unselfish mode of life becomes, without his being aware of it, a continuous sermon to the glory of

God and the welfare of man. He is a soul who achieves life precisely by losing it—by giving up his dreams of happiness.

After six years of silence and six years of energetic preparatory study and work came the novel *Iron* (1918) as the first volume of a series he had planned. The action takes place about Filipstad in Vermland, Sweden's ore region; it is concentrated in a period of three days, and it is unfolded for us through the experiences and thoughts of Steffan Choräus, the fifteen year old son of a landed proprietor. The author's purpose was to write a great philosophical novel of civilization, the theme being that man is at once the master and the slave of iron; iron brings wealth, power, and culture, but it brings also want, suffering, and abomination. But the author crumpled under the weight of his subject; in spite of its magnificent symbolism, the novel strikes one as being overburdened and unintelligible; it is enormously heavy and in parts almost impossible to understand.

A week after the appearance of this book Harald Kidde died a victim of the great influenza epidemic which ravaged Europe in 1918. Among his contemporaries, firmly fettered as they were by the tangible realities, this brooding dreamer was a lonely man. But admiration for his remarkably idealistic art has steadily grown since his death. His too early death was a sad loss to the intellectual life of Denmark.

A decided contrast to the domestic idyl is formed by the decadent and barbaric novels of Aage von Kohl (born 1877). His chief work, *The Palace of*

the Microbes (I–III, 1908), is a brilliant and imposing, but uncomfortably harrowing and repulsive picture of the experiences of a Russian officer with Admiral Rosjdestvenski's fleet from its departure from St. Petersburg to its total destruction in the Strait of Tsushima—a powerful study of the psychology of fear and utter desperation.

Mention should be made of three women who pursue the difficult art of the novel. GYRITHE LEMCHE (born 1866) has chosen as her special domain the broadly planned historical novel, as *Edwardsgave* (I–IV 1900–12). KARIN MICHAËLIS (born 1872) is a fine feminine psychologist and a talented writer, frequently occupied with the pathological aspects of the life of the soul. Her chief work is *The Girl with the Glass Shards* (1924 et seq.). The varied and uneven production of THIT JENSEN (born 1876), which includes, among other things, some good contributions to the literature of the soil, such as *The Earth* (1915), is literature with a purpose both in the good sense of the term and in the less favorable one. It is stamped by the author's fiery soul, her fighting zeal, and her vigorous eloquence.

The most interesting of the dramatists is SVEN LANGE (born 1868). In their technique and in the subtlety with which the problems are set forth his plays remind one of those of Ibsen, but they often impress one as being artificial; there is a lack of life and vigor in his characters. The best of the plays are *A Martyr* (1896), *A Criminal* (1903) and

Samson and Delila (1909). Among Lange's novels special mention should be made of his three great cultural pictures: *A Day at Hirschholm Palace* (1924), dealing with the time of Struensee; *Amor and Bacchus* (1926), the leading characters in which are the Danish men of letters, Rahbek and P. A. Heiberg; and *The First Battles* (1925), which pictures the youth of Georg Brandes and the "Modern Awakening" of the 70's.—Other dramatists of this period are HENRI NATHANSEN (born 1868), who wrote *Within the Walls* (1912), and JULIUS MAGNUSSEN (born 1882), the author of *Whoso Loveth His Father* (1911).

Far more important than the dramatic writing of this period is its poetry, of which there are several distinguished exponents. Jeppe Aakjær has already been mentioned, but the leading position belongs properly to Valdemar Rördam.

VALDEMAR RÖRDAM (born in 1872 at Dalby in Sealand) is a minister's son of an old and esteemed clerical family; both the idyllic little market town and the quiet parsonage have impressed themselves deeply on his writing. His first book of verse, *Sun and Cloud* (1895), was nothing out of the ordinary, but in the following year came the decisive turning point in his life and his work. In 1896 he suffered a breakdown from overexertion; he proved to have an affection of the chest in an advanced stage, and it seemed that all hope was gone. But he survived the crisis, and on his sick bed his writing attained its full originality and strength; while still confined to his bed, he wrote the beautiful little epos, *Beowulf*

(published in 1899), the book of verse entitled *Three Strings* (1897) and the greater part of the collection *Danish Speech* (1901). At this time sympathetic friends supplied him with such generous support that he was able to undertake a long journey to Schwarzwald and Italy, with the result that he completely regained his health.

After his return home he immediately won over the artistic portion of the public with *Three Strings* and *Danish Speech;* he obtained the ear of the general public with *Gudrun Dyre* (1902), an erotic, present-day story in verse, which attracted a great deal of attention and aroused violent discussion. It is rather a massive work, naïve in its treatment of the problem involved, but rich in charming detail and written in splendid, bubbling verse.

These first works already showed that the lyric was Rördam's proper field, and his later development confirmed this fact. At the same time, however, he has tried his hand also at the prose story, the epic, and the drama, though in each case without decided success. The most important of these attempts is the long epic, *Jens Hvas of Ulvborg* (I–II, 1922–23), which is laid in part on the island of Java; it includes much rich and great poetry, but it is marred by its disproportionate length—a besetting sin in Rördam's work. Among his plays, *Buddha, Fortune's Favorite* (1925) is perhaps the best.

As a lyricist Rördam has learned from the great Danish Romanticists, from Oehlenschläger and Grundtvig, from Winther and Drachmann, and next to them from the English poets, but his art is wholly

his own, and it is highly original. Characteristic of him is his huge production; his volumes of original poetry number more than twenty, and to these may be added translations of poems from the World War and of English lyrics, including love poems and selections from Kipling. A good and very copious selection is to be had in *Selected Poems of Twenty Years* (I–II, 1918); of the collections since that time there are five that deserve mention: *The Old Parsonage* (1917), *Small Town Idyls* (1918), *Across the Indian Ocean* (1920), *Bird Songs* (1924) and *Flower Verses* (1925).

Unfortunately a result of this enormous productivity is a corresponding uncertainty and unevenness. Few of his collections are wholly irreproachable; but even the least important show time after time the hand of the great master.

This poesy, with its sure, proud touch and its full, vigorous note, forms a complete break with the quiet, simple lyric of the 90's. No other Danish poet spans such a register as does Rördam. He plays upon the language like a virtuoso; in his poetry the delicate alternates with the coarse, softly breathed lightness with monumental weight, the sublime with the banal. He is master also of all the various sorts of lyrics: First the personal moods, such as the victory of life in the battle against sickness; then poems of love and of the home, some of them glowing with passion, others instinct with knightly tenderness. Next—and even more important—the nature poems. Here the eye impressions are the vital ones; he understands as no other how to reproduce light, air, and colors; his landscapes are seen with

the eye of the hunter and the outdoor man. Together with his love for nature belongs his love for and his faith in the people. The poet develops into a bard, an agitator, a prophet, who fights untiringly in verse and prose to restore the self-confidence and self-respect of the people, in spite of all faint-heartedness and national surrender. And that "In spite of all," which is ever Rördam's slogan, made him place himself on the side of the South Jutlanders in their great fight with the Prussians to maintain their own nationality. His vigorous optimism endured through the evil years, and he could, with better right than most, sing of the successful outcome of the strife. With the Jutland situation deal his books, *The Old Captain* (1906–07), *Those Down There* (1917) and *The Rainbow* (1919).

Rördam's knightly and virile poetry has, however, found its most artistically pure and most classical expression in the idyl; and in the two small collections, *The Old Parsonage* and *Small Town Idyls,* where the memories of his childhood are turned into poetry, his poetic art up to now has reached its zenith.

Kai Hoffmann (born 1874) made his début in 1899 with a collection of poems entitled *Lilies in the Dark,* which showed him to be strongly influenced by French Symbolism. In his later collections, however, he soon attained his own firm and personal style. Hoffmann's art is fastidious and distinguished; his lyrics are terse, concise, markedly virile in tone, and quite unsentimental. In his nature poems, using plain and simple media, he presents moods that are

pure and uncomplicated; the sea, in particular, he describes with simplicity and power. But he can write also fine love poems, virile patriotic hymns, and free-spoken ditties such as the poem to *The Vulgar Black Quid.*

While in Hoffmann, in spite of the genuineness of his feelings, one notes the city dweller in his relationship to nature, this relationship is far more elementary and intimate in the poetry of THÖGER LARSEN (born 1875). Larsen hails from Lemvig, south of the Limfjord, and the book of verse which brought him recognition bears the significant title *Earth* (1904). His volume, *Selected Poems* (1917), is filled with true impressions of the scenery of his native district; his undimmed senses are freely receptive to its fertile and sappy luxuriance; his art is linked to the living present and seldom dreams of the past or the future. But it is not linked merely to the earth; his astronomical studies have shown him the way to a mighty and magnificent cosmic poesy.

In the poetry of the Lollander OLAF HANSEN (born 1870) nature pictures are painted in the half-light of memories and dreams. His remarkable lyrics, which are deeply personal and strongly determined by his feelings, have in their greatest moments almost the character of visions. Both Thöger Larsen and Olaf Hansen have busied themselves with translations from the *Eddas* and other ancient Icelandic poetry.

Outside the domain of poetry, Thöger Larsen has published two collections of short stories, *The Edge of the Fjord* (1913) and *The Mill* (1915), which

present bold pictures from the life of the people of Jutland, and Olaf Hansen has written a series of versified lyric-romantic dramas, of which the most important is *In Rungsted Tavern* (1914).

Among the other poets of this period mention should be made of the cantata writer, L. C. NIELSEN (born 1871), and CHRISTIAN RIMESTAD (born 1878), who is influenced by the French Symbolist school. Rimestad, besides being a poet, is a fine critic, and in *From Stuckenberg to Seedorf* (1923) he has written the history of the newest Danish poetry.

2: NORWAY

The new Realism without illusions, which succeeded the bright dreams of Neo-Romanticism, has in Norway its most important representative in a woman, SIGRID UNDSET.

She was born in Kalundborg, Denmark, in 1882, grew up in Christiania, and made her literary début in 1907 with *Fru Marta Oulie,* a novel in the form of a diary. It is a typical woman's book, somewhat impersonal, but honest in its depiction of human character. Its theme—the wife who feels a belated remorse for her unfaithfulness to her honest but rather narrow-minded husband—points immediately to the fundamental problem in Mrs. Undset's writing, both the modern and the historical—the problem of the relationship between man and woman in marriage.

The author shows greater self-confidence in *The Happy Age* (1908). In the two novelettes which

make up this book and in others of the same period, she has drawn pictures of the capable, independent, rather self-possessed young girls of the present time, who in the midst of the drab, cheerless routine of everyday life yet cherish secret dreams of happiness, but who do not permit themselves to be crushed by broken illusions.

Mrs. Undset's first great success was *Jenny* (1911). This daring erotic novel, in which a young emancipated woman artist is placed in a harrowing double relationship to a young man and his father, marks a progress in the delineation of men and women, and at the same time forms the conclusion of the works of Sigrid Undset's youth. In her next very long and ponderous novel, *Spring* (1914), she appears as a moralist; it is a book about happiness in the home, about the vital elements of the harmony existing between man and wife, each of whom ministers to the development of the other, and back of its drab realism one notes a more optimistic outlook on life.

Her collections of novelettes, *Humble Destinies* (1912), *The Splinter of the Troll Mirror* (1917), and *The Wise Virgins* (1918), correspond to her long novels in their choice of themes and in their style. These books, by their genuineness and their authenticity, added greatly to the reputation of their author; their aim was the honest and painstaking delineation of human character; a merely artistic viewpoint was utterly foreign to them.

But Sigrid Undset owes her position in the front rank of the novelists to her powerful three-volume historical novel *Kristin Lavransdatter*, the three

parts of which are entitled, respectively, *The Bridal Wreath* (1920), *The Mistress of Husaby* (1921) and *The Cross* (1922). The action takes place in Norway in the first half of the fourteenth century; the heroine is the daughter of the large land-owner, Lavrans Björgulfsön, and we follow her from her childhood to her death of the Plague in 1350. The central theme of the narrative is her love for the knightly but frivolous and irresponsible Erlend Nikulaussön and their difficult and troubled married life. As is the case in the novels of Walter Scott, the chief characters are all fictitious.

This great work marks a veritable revival of the historical novel. It is not merely that the demand for correctness in picturing the scene of the story has been met in a manner that is both brilliant and satisfactory. An entire social civilization is made to live for us in the country and in town, in everyday and holiday mood; it is the time of Haakon V and of King Magnus—a powerfully effective bit of the Middle Ages, founded upon solid knowledge and vivified by a mighty imagination.

Corresponding to the thoroughgoing external accuracy of the picture is its essential historic truth. The reader is forced involuntarily back through five hundred years. The persons in the book have their being in a spiritual atmosphere quite different from our own. In their outlook on life, the old Norse conception of morality comes in intimate contact with the dominating ideas of the Catholic Church, and their actions and judgements have their origin, time after time, consciously or unconsciously, in religious motives.

The strength of the work lies in its feeling for that which is universally human back of all the conditions that are determined by the time. We not only believe in the men and women in the book; we feel with them. In spite of the distance between the Middle Ages and our own time in modes of thought and feeling, the fundamental human relationships are the same, and the fundamental human emotions likewise. The novel becomes a story of everyday life in spite of its medieval plot: the tragedy of a wife and mother with many disappointments and sorrows and but few modest joys. The transformation of the passionate young girl in *The Bridal Wreath* into the worn and humble mother in *The Cross* is carried out with a keen understanding of the human soul and with a realism that is patient and unafraid; patient, because it neglects no characteristic detail, no illuminating trait; unafraid, because it does not permit itself to be frightened by any possible esthetic delicacy on the part of the reader.

This novel is tremendously long, and it cannot be denied that the last part in particular has its dead moments. But because of its objective artistry it ranks as a work of the first magnitude in Northern literature of modern times.

Kristin Lavransdatter is, up to the present time, Sigrid Undset's chief work. It is not surpassed by her next historical novel, *Olav Audunssön* (1925–27), a gloomy medieval story of everyday life, painful in its hopeless realism and told with a depressing diffuseness that is out of all proportion.

The writer of this generation who is most widely known outside of Norway is undoubtedly JOHAN BOJER (born 1872). With his devotion to problems and causes he continues the line of Björnson and Ibsen; he is a moralist and a controversialist, always in touch with his time, and a zealous preacher and teacher. But his is no profound or original mind. He strives after a realism like that of the 70's, but his psychology is only slightly convincing, and in general he is inclined to sacrifice probability upon the altar of moral purpose. His novels are sums which work out all too easily. The validity of his proof is weakened by his patent arrangement of the premises upon which it is based. In addition to this comes a somewhat uncertain style and a tendency to exaggeration which often distorts the objective truth of the picture. But one cannot deny him ingenuity in the statement of his problems, a firm and sure grasp of his material, and frequently a fertile wealth of ideas.

Bojer made his first success with the novel *A Public Procession* (1896), which was a typical expression of the political weariness that had seized upon the country after the final victory of parliamentarianism, and which we encountered also in Kielland's last books. With much imagination and some exaggeration it is shown how politics spoils the Norwegian peasants, tears them loose from their natural surroundings, corrupts their soundly human mode of thought, undermines the feeling of contentment, and destroys the homes. The book shows decided talent. Its trend is carried further in the next two

novels, *The Eternal War* (1899) and *Mother Leah* (1900).

A new period is ushered in with the touching story, *A Pilgrimage* (1902), which pictures the tragedy of a mother who has given up her child. More important, however, is the next book, *The Power of a Lie* (*Troens magt,* 1903), Bojer's most original work. It is an acute psychological experiment, deeply pessimistic in execution. The novel deals with a peasant who lies to himself and to others, and who gradually comes to believe in his asserted rights and, therefore, with a clear conscience destroys his honorable opponent. Related to this book is *Treacherous Soil* (*Vort rige,* 1908); but here the sophistry is so evident that the psychology fails.

It was not until the years immediately preceding and during the World War that Bojer won his greatest fame. His zeal was now directed against the prevailing mechanization of the soul; he issued a call to arms in defense of the world of inner values, which is man's true kingdom, even though all outward things fail him; and he dreamed of a new, vitally affirmative religion, which was to replace the ascetic teachings of Christianity. The books of this period are: *Life* (1911), *The Prisoner Who Sang* (1913), *The Great Hunger* (1916), *The Face of the World* (1917), and the play, *Sigurd Braa* (1916). The most original of these is *The Prisoner Who Sang,* a very vivid and curious picture of an unruly visionary. The most typical and most consistent of the novels is *The Great Hunger,* dealing with the superman, Per Holm, whose outward prosperity is destroyed, so that from having been a great

engineer concerned with projects of world-wide importance, he becomes a poor village blacksmith, but who at the same time experiences a spiritual growth, so that he finally conquers himself and, one night in the spring, sows grain in his enemy's field. The trend of these books appears again in Bojer's latest novel, *The New Temple* (1927).

Bojer is at his best as an artist when he lets moral purpose go by the board, as in *The Last of the Vikings* (1921), a strong and splendid picture of life among the Lofoten fishermen toward the end of the nineteenth century. Here his really great epic talent is done full justice.

While the purpose and the idea are the important things for Bojer, the interest of PETER EGGE (born in Trondhjem in 1869) is centered in the delineation of men and women. His production is voluminous and of uneven value; it includes pictures of the life of the people, psychological novels, popular comedies, and serious problem plays. He is ponderous, painstaking, and conscientious. He does not dazzle as Bojer does, but he is always reliable, solid, and genuine, and back of his quiet narrative tone one notes subdued sympathy and quiet irony.

Egge began as a delineator of the life of the people with the charming story *Common People* (1891), which was followed by several good collections. His special domain is Trondhjem and the uplands about the city; his peasant pictures are vividly effective in their quiet taciturnity. At the same time he wrote psychological novels, such as *Gammelholm* (1899), a novel of artist life, but his

first real success was *The Heart* (1907), a serious and penetrating picture of a marriage between two dissimilar natures. Of his recent novels the most important are *By the Deep Fjords* (*Inde i fjordene,* 1920), a great cultural picture from the storm and stress period of the 70's; *Jægtvig and His God* (1923), a curious story of a sectarian shoemaker who dreams of founding a new religion; and the sad and delicate *Hansine Solstad* (1925).

In several popular comedies Egge has drawn droll types in whimsical situations, as in *Jakob and Kristoffer* (1900), *The Wedding Fund* (1906) and others; later his ambitions have been directed toward the higher problem drama in the spirit of Ibsen. The play *The Rift* (1914), in particular, is ably constructed and has real value.

Gabriel Scott (born 1874) will be remembered for his long historical novel, *The Ordeal by Fire,* which includes *The Story of Jan Vibe* (1915) and *The Life of Enok Ruben* (1917); the scene of these books is laid in the South of Norway about 1770, and they present an effective cultural picture, both the landscape and the people being described with fine artistry. That love for the home soil and for the quiet ones of the earth, which runs through all of Scott's writing, has found its most poetic expression in the idyl, *The Fountain* (1918). It tells of a fisherman, Markus, from a little Southern Norwegian fishing village; a childlike and happy person, whose quiet and humble life is a sermon on frugal contentment and trusting love of God and of his neighbor.

A man of individual but uncertain talent is Johan Frederik Vinsnes (born 1866), who, in opposition to the life of the present day with its unbearable conditions and its bitter class wars, proclaims peace and the feeling of brotherhood, as in the novel *A Street Crossing* (1914). He attacks with fearless courage such modern movements as for instance Communism, in *The Storting is Burning* (1921); but the controversialist and preacher in him often rob the artist in him of his power.

The Romanticism of the 90's is continued by Sigurd Mathiesen (born 1871). He is a writer for the chosen few; an exquisite stylist, markedly artistic in his choice of themes and in his technique. His masters are Edgar Allan Poe and Dostoievski; his special forte is the weird and the uncanny; he concerns himself by preference with pathological and psycho-physical problems from the night side of the soul life and from the borderland of consciousness. His first books were the most important. These included the short story collections, *Young Souls* (1903) and *Home Soil* (1908); and the novels, *Hide Unas* (1903) and *Grudge* (1906). His later works, consisting of some novels, a play, and a collection of poems, lack the skillful artistic sureness of the works of his youth.

Another writer who continues the spirit of the 90's is Andreas Haukland (born 1873), who with his violent, colorful word-painting and his turgid nature pictures is a temperamental disciple of Hamsun. Among his books are the stories about "Ol-Jörgen" (1902 et seq.) and *The Norns are Spinning* (1923), a novel of saga times.

Finally among the novelists mention must also be made of the gifted painter, CHRISTIAN SKREDSVIG (1854–1924), who, in his open-hearted autobiographical novel, *The Miller's Son* (1912), and in *Even's Homecoming* (1916), has sought to carry over his impressionism, with its romantic feeling and its realistic observation of nature, from the art of painting to the art of writing.

The most important and most interesting of the women writers, after Sigrid Undset, is RAGNHILD JÖLSEN (1875–1908). Her entire production, aside from a volume of posthumous writings, includes but four short novels and a collection of short stories. She died at the age of thirty-two, just as her literary ability was reaching its full development. She was, therefore, overlooked by her contemporaries, and it is true that her books suffer from both technical and stylistic weaknesses; but because of her faculty for inexorably keen observation, her vivid imagination, and her glowing temperament, she towers above most of her literary colleagues.

Ragnhild Jölsen's first book, *Ve's Mother* (1903), presented, in spite of its lack of clarity and sureness, a remarkably sharp picture of a woman who is driven by her unsatisfied need for love into one disappointment after another until she dies as a morphine addict. This theme comes again in the next two books, *Rikka Gan* (1904) and *Fernanda Mona* (1905), picturing women in two generations of a degenerate family. But here the tribal feeling becomes the main theme. The struggle to save the family home drives proud Rikka Gan to sacrifice

her honor and forces her with demoniac power into infamy and crime, until she becomes hardened in hate and evil; and the tribal idea rests like a Nemesis over the gentle Fernanda, destroying her happiness, so that in hopeless despair she takes her life. In *The Chronicles of Hollas* (1906) the chief emphasis is in the picture of the milieu of a district of Eastern Norway; the style now becomes more realistic, and elements of grotesque humor come into the story. In *Factory Stories* (1907), she has presented a series of real life pictures interwoven with nature mysticism which retains its power over the imagination of the people; the lively humor and the direct narrative method with its use of dialect, which have replaced the stiff rhythmical prose of the earlier books, show plainly what great possibilities were lost through her early death.

Another woman writer is NINI ROLL ANKER (born 1873), whose most important books are the novel of feminine psychology, *The Weaker Sex* (1915), and the historical Empire scenes, *In the Magistrate's House* (1925). Still another is the charming and very prolific BARBRA RING (born 1870), who has written not only amusing children's books, but also ambitious psychological novels, such as *Into the Dark* (*För kulden kommer*, 1915), and broadly executed milieu pictures, such as *The Circle* (1921) and *Sisters* (1922), both of which present scenes from the region about Christiania in the 1840's.

As in Denmark, so also in Norway, writing which

deals with the native soil forms a significant part of the literature of this period. Its leading representative is Olav Duun.

Olav Duun was born in 1876 in Namdalen, north of Trondhjem; this region is the scene of all his novels and stories, and most of his books are written in the dialect of the region. Thus he has, to begin with, his own narrow, sharply circumscribed domain, where he is familiar both with the people and with nature, and by his ability to enter intimately into the spirit of the little world of a Namdal parish he has been able to create one of the great works of modern Norwegian literature: the tribal saga of the men of Juvik.

All of Duun's earlier writings, his short tales from 1907, the longer stories such as *Three Friends* (1914) and the novel *The Good Conscience* (1916), may be regarded as preparatory to the long major work *The Juvikings* (*Juvikingar* 1918–23), which relates in six novels the story of a peasant family from about 1800 down to our day. The titles of the separate novels are: *The Juvikings, Blind, The Great Wedding, Fairyland, Youth* and *The Storm.*

With a true epic calm, which reminds one of the Norse-Icelandic sagas, Olav Duun has here related the story of the Juvik family. The novel begins with the founding of the family home, and it ends with the courageous death in the storm of the last proud descendant. It begins in a world of superstition and mysticism: the progenitor of the family, Per Anders, fights with the Devil himself and overcomes him; it ends with the dawn of a new era, in which the parish acquires a bank and a herring-oil factory, and

in which conflicts develop between the peasants and the working people. It alternates with periods of prosperity and periods of depression; the family moves from Juvik to Håberg, and finally this old property, too, is parceled out.

We follow the family through its many generations and branches. Here are strong and powerful figures: Per Anders, the founder of the family; his son's son, Anders, blind and wise in his old age, acting as an oracle in his seat by the fireside; Anders's imperious daughter, Åsel, the family's strongest personality in a period of decided depression; and her daughter's son, Odin, in whom all the great chieftain qualities of the family are assembled. But there are weak men too, especially Ola, the teacher, in whom the artistic temperament of the family has found its outlet; he plays, writes, tells stories—but all at the expense of his powers of action.

Throughout the entire saga of the family Duun illuminates the relationship of the people of Juvik to the world about them. Their paganism ends with Anders's reconciliation with the Church and with Our Lord. In their relation to the parish they are leaders, chiefs, who may be thrust into the background at times when their fortunes are low, but who are always able to regain their power. They are constantly seen as parts of a great whole; their destinies are determined by tradition and inheritance from generation to generation, by their surroundings, and not least by nature, which the author, without a single elaborate description, has contrived to present vividly to his readers.

The style is completely objective. Duun narrates

without digressions; the taciturnity which is characteristic of the persons of whom he writes has set its mark also upon his own narrative style. Here are no superfluities, no pointers, no explanations; the author lets his work speak for itself. This series of novels has rightly been called, by the Danish critic Jörgen Bukdahl, "the best and most penetrating picture of Norwegian peasant life since the days of the sagas."

Another mighty epos written in the Landsmaal is Kristofer Uppdal's romance, *The Dance Through the World of Shadows* (1911–24). It pictures conditions among working people in the Norwegian rural districts—the irresponsible, wandering laborers, the mine workers and the railway construction workers—and with its wealth of sharp detail it forms a contribution to the history of the labor movement and its psychology.

KRISTOFER UPPDAL was born in 1878 at Beitstaden, north of the Trondhjem Fjord. He has fought his way up from humble circumstances and has been a mine worker, a railway worker, and later a salesman and journalist, so that he has first-hand knowledge of the world he describes in his books.

He began as a poet, producing *Songs* (1905), *Love* (1919), *The Altar Fire* (1920) and other books of verse. It is a peculiarly hard and angular poetry, broad and uneven, but honest and genuine in feeling. In 1911 came the first novel, *The Dance Through the World of Shadows,* which has given the entire cycle its name. The idea grew upon

Uppdal gradually, so that the series does not constitute a complete artistic unity like Duun's great tribal saga. And the books appeared in a different order from that in which they belong according to the continuity. They should be read in this order: *The Master Miner*, *Witchcraft in the Air*, *Wandering*, *The King*, *The Dance Through the World of Shadows*, *The Cathedral Builder*, *Change*, *The Röysing People*, *The Mountain Woman*, and *The Ordeal* (*Herdsla*, 1924).

Book after book shows in a series of colorful and strongly realistic pictures the workers' battle to rise in the community; the contrast between them and the peasants, who are fettered by tradition, between the old fashioned patriarchal conditions in the out of the way parishes and the modern social order which, by means of the railway, penetrates everywhere and turns everything topsyturvy. They picture the life of the common laborers in the mines or in railway construction gangs, but also the headquarters of the movement in the Capital, where the leaders are building their strong, solid organizations, and they tell of the conflicts within the unions, with the leaders opposing each other. In *The Cathedral Builder* the solidly built structure of the trades unions is compared to the heaven-aspiring Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages. The central figure is Törber Landsem, the son of the master miner. From a wandering laborer he fights his way up to be a powerful man in the union; by his side stand Öllöv Skjöllögrinn and Sjugur Rambern, each of whom in his own way reaches a post of leadership;

in each of the three one notes a true Norwegian duality of temperament, alternating between the dreamer and the sober, practical man.

Besides these a swarm of characters and destinies find their places in the picture. The individual books have some of the characters in common, but each has its own separate plot. Richest in imaginative qualities is *The King,* which deals with Törber Landsem's youth and years of apprenticeship. As a whole this huge work is somewhat uneven, and it suffers from its disproportionate length, but as a picture of the times and the people it is weighty and imposing.

The second important writer who deals with the vagabond laborer is JOHAN FALKBERGET, born 1879 near the mining town, Röros. He makes no concealment of the stern realities of life, or of the want and misery he himself as a lad endured in the hard life of the mines; nevertheless, he has preserved, deep within himself, a firm faith in life. There is a great deal of the romanticist in him; back of his descriptions of the stern struggle for existence one perceives the overwhelming impression of the beautiful mountain scenery. His stories, *Black Mountains* (1907), *Eternal Snow* (1908), *Primeval Night* (1909), and *Fimbul Winter* (1911), are crass and outspoken, and they contain coarse scenes from the world of poverty and drunkenness; but they conceal at bottom a visionary yearning and an unconquerable optimism, which in his saddest book, *Burnt Offering* (1918), finds consolation in the Christian faith. Falkberget has won

great popularity with a series of novels of the people; and he has given evidence of considerable artistry in *Lisbet of Jarnfjeld* (1915), a novel of married life, and in the historical tale, *The Fourth Night Watch* (1923); the scene of the latter is laid in Röros in the lean years after 1807, and it deals with the pastor, Benjamin Sigismund, his work in the mountain village, and his tragic lot, until he finds peace in a humble relationship with God.

The Oslo proletariat has its own writer in OSKAR BRAATEN (born 1881). His particular domain is the East Side slum. His realism is emotional, but genuine and without ulterior purpose. Braaten's early works were written in the Oslo dialect; they are notable primarily for their excellent and vivid descriptions of the milieu, while the action is of secondary importance. These works are for the most part plays, serious and sympathetic social dramas, such as *The Brat* (1911), *Big Anders* (1912), *The Fortress* (1915), to which may be added the comedy, *The Big Christening* (1925); but there are stories also, as *Little Gunda* (1913) and *While the Wheels Are at a Standstill* (1916).

Later on Braaten turned to the novel written in the Riksmaal, or official language of the country. His chief work is *The Wolves' Lair* (1919) with its continuation, *Matilde*. The first presents a both touching and humorous picture of three children who grow up in the wretched barracks called "the wolves' lair," filled with strange types of people to whom life is but an affliction; the other deals with the vain struggle of the poor to tear themselves away from

the miserable conditions in which they live. Related themes are dealt with in *Upward* (1924) and other stories. Braaten is an eminent psychologist, and he pictures his "down and out" figures with deep sympathy and with a sure artistic touch.

While the drama recedes to the background during this period, poetry has two distinguished representatives in Herman Wildenvey and Olaf Bull.

HERMAN WILDENVEY (born 1886) bewitched the public with his first collection of poems, *Bonfires* (1907), and he gained ground with each new book; he became, more than anyone else, the poet of youth. *Selected Poems* (1917) is a volume of the best of the lightsome and captivating output of his first ten years as a poet; an edition of his collected poems was begun in 1927. Wildenvey has lived much in Denmark, and the influence of Danish poetry, especially that of Sophus Claussen, is noticeable in his work. In return he himself has become the model for a school of the younger Danish poets.

Wildenvey is the gay and youthful poet, without social ties and without any idea which he feels it his duty to proclaim. He writes in praise of Spring, of wine, and of women; his poetry does not seek that which is profound, but that which is facile and delicate; there is a smile in it and a jest back of it that disarm all criticism. This is seen even in the rhythm and in the choice of words—light, dancing parlando rhythms and easy, everyday words; at times there is a conscious carelessness in his verse, as if he were lazily sauntering along; but there are times, too, when it tightens into epigrammatic terseness.

The content is capricious gayety. There is light and frivolous love-making in his love poems; they make sport of virtue and morality; but the passion in them has little depth; it burns with a quick flame, but it is of short duration, and the partings have but little sadness. Wildenvey can strike a note that is both beautiful and warm; sadness and sentimentality are not foreign to him, as may be seen in the poem *Fairy Tale for Ellen,* which is written to a child who is about to die; but his preference is for wanton humor. He loves to scandalize the solid citizenry, he touches on the cynical and the frivolous, he is disrespectful and devil-may-care, but his inoffensive joy in life, as light as that of a song bird, atones for it all.

In his later collections of poems—*Secrets* (1919), *Magic Words* (*Trold i ord,* 1920), *The Fire Orchestra* (1923), *Figs from Thistles* (1925)—he has sought to find expression for a stronger and deeper conception of life. The World War has had its effect. The form is the same, but the tone is deeper and more earnest than before; even the religious mood makes itself felt at times.

A complete contrast to the care-free gayety of Wildenvey is formed by the profound, despairing melancholy of OLAF BULL (born 1881). He made his début as a poet in 1909; his *Collected Poems* were published in 1919, and *The Stars* in 1924. His work is all profoundly serious and expressed in broad, quiet rhythms and simple, earnest words. All artificiality is completely foreign to this poet.

Like Wildenvey, Bull is a Bohemian without so-

cial ties, but there the resemblance ends. For with Bull homelessness is tragic. He is filled with sad longing for the permanent relationships of society, where he, however, is never able to strike root; he is doomed always to live the wandering life of a nomad, and his spirit is heavy with a fearful feeling of loneliness which ends in despair. There is a mood of death in his poems—of death which is annihilation without any hope back of it.

This homeless melancholy may be noted in his attitude toward nature; one may come upon a single cheerful poem such as *Morning,* but even in his poems of Spring bitter earnestness is dominant. It is the fundamental note in his erotic poems, where a wonderfully delicate mood of happiness in *The Return* stands alone among expressions of hopeless longing, or of a hectic mingling of love and hate which reminds one of the battle of the sexes in Strindberg, or expressions of sympathy for those who have been overlooked and set aside, as in *Elvira.* His despair is deepest in the poems dealing with death and the transitoriness of life, such as *Laurels* and *Impotence.* At times they take the form of mournful elegies on the brevity of life, as in the verses on the death of the two young girls, Emerence Christence and Clara Eugenie, but there are times when they grow into desperate accusations against God, as in *Molock, Christmas Night,* and *The Snow.* The poet seeks healing for his wounds in fantasies and dreams, but even there the stern, cold reality remains when the dream is over, as in *Gobelin.*

Strong and spontaneous in feeling and wonderfully intimate and attractive in the soft, subdued

music of its style is this remarkably beautiful poetry. With his very first book Olaf Bull reached a place among Norway's greatest lyric poets, and he has kept that place ever since.

ALF LARSEN (born 1885) is the author of *The Entrance* (1915) and *Rushing Winds* (1927). He sings of the sea, especially in misty weather, in fog and in rain; or he finds characteristic and beautiful expression for the poetry of the harbor on desolate rainy evenings. His poems are finished as to form, and their tone, while gloomy and depressing, still has a distinct charm.

Another master of poetic form is TORE ÖRJASÆTER (born 1886), who writes in the Landsmaal. His collections of poems, such as *Race Heritage* (1908) and *Song of Man* (1915), include nature poems which are genuine and full of deep feeling, and remarkably complex erotic moods. In his two narrative poems, *Gudbrand Langleite* (1913) and its sequel, *The Bridge* (1920), he has wished to picture the battle between will and fate and the conflicts between earthly love and the longing for Heaven. It is an uneven work, but planned on a large scale and containing some splendid passages.

3: SWEDEN

In Sweden the period from 1900 to 1914 is a time of restless struggle. No single trend is dominant in literature, but at several points there is an attempt to tie up with the Realism of the 80's that preceded the Neo-Romanticism of the 90's. This is true both of the modern erotic problem novels and

of the new writing which deals with social causes. The distance from the optimistic Realism of the 80's is nevertheless noticeable; the influence of the 90's may be perceived in a certain refined skepticism and in the cultivation of beauty of form, which in Söderberg has a distinguished master.

HJALMAR SÖDERBERG (born 1869) wrote his first short stories under the influence of Bang and J. P. Jacobsen, but his real teachers are the great French short story writers of the 80's, especially Maupassant and Anatole France.

His literary output consists of a succession of collections of short stories: *Storiettes* (1898), *Strangers* (1903), *The Road Grows Dark* (1907), and *The Accomplished Dragon* (1913); four novels: *Aberrations* (1895), *Martin Birck's Youth* (1901), *Doctor Glas* (1905), and *The Serious Game* (1912); three plays: *Gertrud* (1906), *The Evening Star* (1912), and *The Hour of Fate* (1922); besides a couple of volumes of philosophical and religio-philosophical causeries.

His most ingenious works are the short stories, which are little masterpieces of brilliant and finished art. They are all very short, containing a single situation, a witty answer, or often merely a characteristic observation; but with their sly irony they open up wide perspectives; a complete life destiny or an entire conception of the world may be illuminated in a single flash of lightning. They are told with the graceful, elegant, and ready wit of a modern Voltairian, a wit which aims its sarcasm at hypocrisy in the religious and the sexual domain,

and which chooses the clergy in particular as the target for its keen attacks.

The novels are particularly attractive because of the fine local color of their Stockholm background and their sure grasp of the spirit of the day. This is true of his first book, *Aberrations,* and of the important novel of a young man's development, *Martin Birck's Youth,* whose story—the gradual breaking of illusions—reflects the intellectual struggles in the author's own life. An interesting psychological experiment is *Doctor Glas,* whose problem is related to that of *Raskolnikov.* It is the question of the right to take the life of a useless or dangerous human being. Moved by his revolutionary ethical and social ideas, the lonely and timorous physician becomes a murderer in order to set a young woman free from her husband, an unsympathetic clergyman. He gives Pastor Gregorious poison, but this deed fails of its ultimate purpose, for the wife is abandoned by the man she loves; and in the midst of the horror a sharp, ironic light is cast upon the Doctor and his attempt to remedy the arbitrariness and crookedness of life.

Söderberg's nihilism and pessimism culminate in the excellent play, *Gertrud,* and in the somewhat weaker novel, *The Serious Game.* Both of these works picture Eros as a demoniac, devouring force of nature; their "moral" is contained in the play's confession of faith in "the lust of the flesh and the irreparable loneliness of the soul."

Hjalmar Söderberg has a keen eye for the weaknesses, great and small, of mankind, and not least

for his own, and he lays them bare in a manner that is apparently amiable, but in reality quite merciless. He continues the attack of the 80's upon hypocrisy and untruthfulness in religion and morality, but his attack is without indignation. He merely substantiates the rottenness of existence, without offering anything positive in place of that which he has attacked. Back of the gay and smiling surface, back of the beguiling and waggish style, one perceives a profound skepticism, whose irony is a mask for weariness and emptiness. His limpid, transparent prose makes an impression that is wholly Gallic; he is not merely influenced by his master, Anatole France—the two are intellectual kinsmen.

Intellectually related to Hjalmar Söderberg is his fellow-townsman and contemporary, Bo BERGMAN (born in Stockholm in 1869). Both are representatives of pessimism, but while Söderberg is an ironist, Bergman is given to melancholy. "We were born old, and our race had gray hair in its cradle" is how he expresses it in one of his poems.

Bo Bergman's three collections of short stories, *The Dream* (1904), *The Ship* (1917) and *My Friend the Baron* (1926), whose clear and distinguished prose will bear comparison with that of Söderberg, deal chiefly with the stepchildren of life and with the small, desperate tragedies of everyday existence. They are dominated by a deterministic faith in blind destiny and by the feeling of the brevity and hopelessness of life and the constant shipwreck of dreams.

This gloomy outlook on life finds even more

significant expression in his noble, finished, but somewhat cold poetry, as in *Selected Poems* (1919) and *The Eyes of Life* (1922). At times his poems contain keenly satirical observations on contemporary life, and at times personal testimony of inner emotion; one group in particular reproduces in a masterly manner the fine poetic moods of beautiful Stockholm. But the essence of his thought is in those poems which deal with the questions: why and whither. Existence is for Bo Bergman a meaningless play in which men are mere puppets in the hands of the stern, mechanical continuity of causation; his first collection of poems bears the significant title *Marionettes* (1903). He has the melancholy feeling that everything must fade, all illusions must be destroyed; no one shall solve the riddle of life—back of it all there is only darkness.

The tension within this period may best be measured by contrasting with the two skeptics from Stockholm that fighting genius, the Scanian K. G. OSSIAN-NILSSON (born 1875), a firm believer in progress and always eager for battle. His first collections of poems, *Masks* (1900), *Pagans* (1901) and *Eagles* (1902), proclaim with trumpet blasts the dawn of a new era; the poet appeared both as the fiery beater of drums for the legions of progress and as their Caesar-like leader.

Everything is turned to outward action in these poems; they agitate for a party, a cause, or an idea; they call, and they exhort; they preach, and they scoff; they arouse, and they incite. They can rise to the greatness of a hymn, resound with the appeal of

a battle march; they can sink to rhymed journalism —always the rhythms reverberate and sweep onward, and the rhetorical points crackle with inspiring festive eloquence.

Ossian-Nilsson is a typical son of his time, and his writing is closely bound up with the period. In it are united hero worship and Social Democracy. The connecting link is the new plebeian conqueror type which, without ancestors and without traditions, fights his way up to power. For this reason he is at once a demagogue and an admirer of tyrants, an Imperialist and a Social Democrat, a revolutionary and a burning patriot. The condottiere is his real hero, power and the defiant will to rule are his ideals. With him, the conviction of the right of the ego is stronger than the feeling of belonging to a party; a rabid ego worship is the heart of these tempestuous poems.

Ossian-Nilsson loves strong words and strong colors. He is impetuous in the expression of his pagan feelings, persecutes the Church with the passion of a Voltaire, looks down upon Christianity with the contempt of a Nietzsche. As mouthpieces for his philosophy of might he chooses history's greatest representatives of master morality: Ulysses, Caesar, Louis XI, Cromwell, Richelieu, Mirabeau and Marat, Bismarck and Cecil Rhodes. And he revels with the imagination of a painter of battle pictures in the deployment of masses and in mighty warlike scenes; he summons the proletariat to arise, but he also glorifies warriors and war in dashing poems, at the expense of the Humanism of the idealists. His admiration is focussed upon a shining

center: Napoleon, the hated and the deified, the living symbol of power, the superman himself.

These poems made an enormous sensation, but Ossian-Nilsson never became the leader that the flaming poetry of his youth seemed to presage. A deeper note is sounded in the poems to home and wife in the later collections, *Orchestra* (1907) and *The Flying Ship* (1910), but otherwise the trend of the poems of his youth is continued, though more weakly and with less spontaneity. In a long trilogy of novels, *The Barbarian Forest* (1908), *The Plain* (1909) and *The Sea* (1910), he has sought to take an independent attitude toward the burning social questions of the day. *The Barbarian Forest* made a violent sensation with its revelations of inner conditions in the Social Democratic organization and with its attacks upon class hatred and upon the merciless party discipline; in *The Plain* he turned with the same passion upon the capitalistic upper class; and finally, in *The Sea,* he sought to find a positive formula for his democratic sympathies and his worship of great personalities.

In later years mass production—in the form of poems, idyllic tales, autobiographical inventories, adventure dramas, plays, and long historical novels—have impaired his artistry and revealed its faults and deficiencies. He lacks depth; his brilliant bravadoes are often too cheap, and his superiority is too much of a pose and too uncertain. But his best things have brilliance and go, a happy faculty of giving new expression to an old truth in a surprising and effective manner, a richly developed feeling for language and rhythm, and these qualities will preserve

his name, even though the greater part of his work may be threatened with quick oblivion.

While Söderberg, Bo Bergman and Ossian-Nilsson seem long ago to have found their permanent and final form, three of the members of the generation from the turn of the century are still in a state of constant development. These are Lidman, Siwertz and Hjalmar Bergman.

Sven Lidman (born 1882) began as a poet, with the three books, *Pasiphaë* (1904), *Primavera* (1905) and *The Fountains* (1906). His burning erotic poems show him to be strongly influenced by the late antique and the Renaissance with their splendor of form, their hectic preaching of the gospel of the flesh, and their rather sultry phrases concerning the worship of beauty and the enjoyment of life. But the lyric sensualist soon developed into an aristocratic legitimist and champion of traditionalism. His great cycle of novels dealing with the Silfverstååhl family, *Stensborg* (1909), *Thure Gabriel Silfverstååhl* (1910), *Merchants and Warriors* (1911), *Carl Silfverstååhl's Adventures* (1912) and *The Child of Dissension* (1913), is extreme in its conservatism. It makes a sharp attack upon liberalism and democracy and condemns Oscar II's indulgence toward Norway at the time of the dissolution of the Union. It represents an aggressive, Swedish nationalism, whose zealous spokesman Lidman was during the World War.

Lidman's latest books mark the third stage in his career—the religious stage. His novels, *The House of the Old Maids* (1918) and *As Through Fire* (1920), are not merely penetrating studies in re-

ligious psychology showing greater artistic maturity than the author's earlier works, but downright devotional works, whose peculiar personal rapture make them constitute one of the most interesting testimonies of the religious unrest and religious exigency of recent years.

Sigfrid Siwertz (born 1882) made his début with a collection of poems, *Dreams of the Street* (1905), and at intervals of years he has returned to poetry, which he cultivates with talent and delicacy. Nevertheless, it is in the prose fiction that his greatest significance lies.

His first collections of short stories were *Margot* (1906), *Circles* (1907) and *Old Folks* (1909). Through the medium of a series of types, chiefly citizens or sailors from the region of Lake Mälar or the Stockholm archipelago, they picture with quiet humor and resigned sympathy the bitter reality of life, tempered only by man's dreams of happiness. Their skeptical outlook on life reminds one of Bo Bergman or Hjalmar Söderberg.

But gradually there developed a yearning for something positive in the form of action, will, and achievement. It found a charming expression in *Mälar Pirates* (1911), which is half a brilliant boys' book about the fantastic experiences of three half-grown lads with a stolen pleasure craft during an entire summer, and half a serious character study framed in splendid nature pictures. The same light-hearted gayety and incipient reconciliation to reality may be noted in *Officials in Search of Adventure* (1912), but the decisive reaction is found in the

novel, *A Flaneur* (1914). Under the influence of the seriousness of the World War it takes the form of a reckoning with the blasé and skeptical esthetic type which shrinks from accepting its responsibilities in life; through adversity the will is awakened and the man is created. The work is typical of the time; its train of thought, influenced by the philosophy of Bergson and in contact with the burning questions of the day on the dark background of the great world catastrophe, is found also in the novel, *Reflected Fire* (1916) and in the mature and significant collection, *Short Stories* (1918).

Siwertz's chief work is the two-volume novel *Downstream* (*Selambs,* 1920). In it the moral problems of capitalism are illuminated through the picture of the lives of five brothers and sisters—"persons whose childhood was in the sign of the Wolf and who never escaped their childhood." It is a book about the curse of wealth: callousness, selfishness, and avarice. It is a modern companion piece to Molière's and Balzac's pictures of avarice, and it is excellent in composition, weighty and strong in its trend. Of less importance are a collection of tragic short stories, published in 1922, and the briskly told novel of action, *Home from Babylon* (1923). The author has found opportunity to display his ability as a humorist in the novel, *The Great Warehouse* (1926).

Siwertz's special province, the scene of most of his poems and stories, is the region about Stockholm. Time after time he has pictured with inimitable artistry the Mälar, the great lake with its many inlets and fjords, with the small friendly towns along

its smiling shore, and the sailing craft on its waters—one of the most beautiful and idyllic parts of Sweden. There may be a certain coldness in his art, and his descriptions of men and women may strike one as being a bit abstract; he is an intellectualist and a philosopher, who seldom permits himself to be carried away; but he is always interesting, and as a stylist he is one of the very best among the younger writers.

In HJALMAR BERGMAN (born 1883) we find the most fertile imagination and the most vigorous talent in this group of authors. He began as a pronounced Romanticist with the drama, *Mary, Mother of Jesus* (1905). A sojourn of several years in Italy gave force and strength to this Romanticism; such works as *Savonarola* (1909), the short story collection, *Amours* (1910), and the Renaissance drama *Parisina* (1915) derive their warmth and brilliance from a deep understanding of Italy's history and nature and from an intense love for strong colors and great passions.

But his true field was found in quite another direction, in a succession of fantastic-burlesque pictures of small town life in Sweden. *The Testament of His Grace* (1910) was the first of these curious novels of the present day; in most of them the action takes place in Bergslagen, the mining district of middle Sweden: *Comedies in Bergslagen* (1914), *The Dance at Frötjärn* (1915), *Knutsmässo Market* (1916) and *Memoirs of a Dead Man* (1918)—the latter remarkable for its gloomy fatalism. His great success was *Markurells in Wadköping* (1919),

grotesquely unrestrained and at the same time humanly touching; among his later works may be mentioned *Grandma and the Lord* (1921), *I, Ljung and Medardus* (1923) and *The Girl in the Swallowtail* (1925).

Besides his novels Bergman has written plays which show great talent. The most characteristic of them are the amusingly constructed *Marionette Plays* (1917). The comedy *Swedenhielms* (1925) was a theatrical triumph.

Hjalmar Bergman's intellectual note is humor. He reminds one of Dickens, or perhaps even more of Jean Paul, but in spite of his good humor his outlook on life is not bright. Out of the dryest commonplace his irrepressible spirits and inexhaustible inventiveness are able to build up with romantic freedom the most grotesque and frolicsome situations; his small town world becomes a collection of queer types, festive caricatures, lifted out of their simple reality.

To this comes a story-telling ability which carries the reader irresistibly along. The action is rich in astonishing surprises; situations that verge on coarse burlesque alternate with scenes of a strange and macabre weirdness; out of a low comedy farce situation there suddenly grows—and without violating the inner logic of the picture—a great, stirring tragedy. And vice versa!

His style sparkles with wit and is markedly subjective. The author constantly takes part in the conversation, makes sport of his characters, but in spite of his romantic irony his portrayal of men and women is astonishingly sure and consistent. His chief

characters are complete psychological analyses, often paradoxical; but by noting a single trait, or by happily hitting off a single peculiarity, he is able to make even the least important of the minor characters stand before us completely alive.

The most typical of the women writers is the brilliant ELIN WÄGNER (born 1882). She is at the same time a clever and spirited journalist who good-humoredly battles for her radical social ideas, and a warm-hearted but quite unsentimental portrayer of men and women. She is the portrayer par excellence of the modern Swedish woman, as in her stories of business girls, *Norrtullsligan* (1908), and the novel of a newspaper woman, *The Penholder* (1910); but she can also write a great novel of a district in Småland with a touching picture of the fate of a peasant's daughter, as in *Åsa-Hanna* (1918), or present a compassionate picture of tragic misery in modern Vienna as in *The Vineyard Laid Waste* (1920).

Other well-known novelists of this period are HENNING BERGER (1872–1924), who has pictured the battle for existence of the Swedish immigrants in America, as in *Bendel & Co.* (1910); HENNING VON MELSTED (born 1875), who brings radical doctrinarianism to his treatment of the relations between the sexes; and GUSTAF JANSON (1866–1913), whose briskly told novels of action have found readers also without the boundaries of Sweden.

While in Denmark and Norway the literature of the native soil occupies itself chiefly with the life of

the peasants or working people, its domain in Sweden is broader. Here the aim, as a rule, is not to picture a single class, but a particular region, a province, a district.

The most monumental work—on the whole probably the most important that Swedish literature has produced since 1900—is Olof Högberg's powerful novel, *The Great Wrath.*

OLOF HÖGBERG (born 1855) is the son of a peasant from Högsjö parish on the lower reaches of the Ångerman River. His interest in the memories of his native district was awakened early, and after he had passed his examinations at Uppsala he returned to Norrland as a teacher of mathematics and a journalist, and he now began in earnest a systematic study of the manners and customs of the common people, its legends and local traditions. The result of twenty years of research was the novel, *The Great Wrath*, and this work, which on its appearance in 1906 was scarcely appraised at its full value, has gradually been unanimously accorded a high place in the history of the Swedish novel. Högberg has since continued his portrayals of his native district in *Baggbölingar* (1911), *Utbölingar* (1912), *The Grand Duke of Lapland* (1915), etc., but interest is centered overwhelmingly in his first book.

The Great Wrath pictures Norrland, the great forest country between the Dale River and the Finnish border, at the close of Sweden's period of greatness, the reigns of Charles XI and Charles XII. But it is no ordinary historical novel. In the manner of its composition it reminds one much

more of the great racial epics of world literature, in which separate tales, legends, and myths are gathered together within one great frame and where the supernatural powers—here represented especially by the Gray Hunter, the mystical tutelary deity of the Ångerman country—constantly intervene in the destinies of individual men and women and of the people as a whole.

The plot of the book is the struggle between the inherited, independent culture of the district which remains essentially pagan in spite of the introduction of Christianity, and the civilization penetrating from the South; or between the great common people on one side and the officials and the clergy on the other. Contrasted with the individualistic aristocraticism, which is so strongly represented in the newer Swedish literature, the effect of this picture of the intellectual and material life of a district is broadly democratic. Its social pathos has a direct connection with the present time, and its central idea, that all should help all, is wholly modern.

The book has interest far beyond the purely literary value. Its portrayal of the cultural struggle reveals an able thinker along historical lines. Furthermore, the book is a bit of folk psychology of the very first rank. It is written by a man, himself of an old Norrland peasant family, who has every qualification for understanding the peasant's mode of thought. The outlook of the people on life and death is therefore reproduced with the imagination of a poet and the insight of a scholar. And finally, the work is a gold mine for students of folk lore; besides the local traditions its treasure of oldtime

lore contains interesting variants of international legends on their travels from Russia or from Norway.

But in considering the wealth of its content it must not be forgotten that this is first and foremost the masterpiece of a creative writer. His mighty imagination has given life to the rich ethnographic and cultural-historical material, and there is a tragic greatness in his picture of the breaking up of the age-old society. The characteristic tone of the work is due in no slight degree to its peculiar archaic style with its unusual expressions and its old-fashioned construction, which reproduces in a lifelike manner the bold speech of the people and the elegant, pompous style of the officials.

Modern Norrland is pictured with power and humor in Ludvig Nordström's short stories and novels. LUDVIG NORDSTRÖM (born in Härnösand in 1882) made his début in 1906 with a collection of poems entitled *Children of Cain* whose chief importance lies in its lucid pictures of the scenery and the life of the people of his native district. But it was as a short story writer that he first gained recognition, and in a colorful and varied succession of tales he has created an entire gallery of drolly characteristic types from the various social strata of a Norrland coastal town, here called Öbacka: fishermen, peasants, saw-mill workers, plain citizens, and dashing members of the upper classes and leaders of society. The titles of these books are: *Fishermen, Citizens,* and *Gentlemen.*

The most important of these is *Citizens* (1909),

in which Nordström rises from the honest, but impersonal realism of *Fishermen* to the imaginative subjective humor which is characteristic of his best things. His writing is vigorous and bold; he is fond of that which is drastic and burlesque, of astonishing and paradoxical similes, and of coarse, unseemly words. Both Rabelais and the English humorists have been his teachers.

Even his first books attain, in the midst of their jesting, a deeper perspective in a romantic philosophical theory of the organic coherence of the universe and in a related cosmic religion. And at the same time—in *Gentlemen,* which deals with the sawmill industry's conquest of the peasant parishes of Ådalen—he takes the social problem under consideration. Both the philosophical-religious and the social problems are touched upon in the gay summer book, *The Twelve Sundays* (1910), and in *Provincial Bohemia* (1911), a voluminous novel of intrigue dealing with newspaper conditions in a small provincial town. The book sparkles with humor, life and movement; it is a cosmic picture of the time, amusing because of its witty paradoxes, but rather terrifying to respectable citizens because of the frequent undisguised indecency of its scenes and especially of the author's choice of words.

But little by little the social philosophy became the central theme of his writing. Nordström originated the slogan, "Totalism," preached the duty of the individual to give himself to the service of wholeness, to subordinate himself to the greater fellowship. Politically his attitude was near to that of Socialism. Examples of his absorption in the social

problem are found in the novels *Ankarsparre* (1912) and *The Gobsman Co., Brokers* (1913). During the war, in opposition to most of his countrymen, he energetically took the part of the Entente in writing and in speech. He regarded the Western powers as the champions of the democracy of the future, and in the novel, *The Journey to Cythere* (1917), he presented a Utopian picture, after the manner of H. G. Wells, of a happy Europe after Germany's defeat. Since the World War he has produced a new series of novels, *The Story of Peter Svensk* (1920 et seq.), which attacks the old-fashioned poetic Romanticism and glorifies technical ingenuity and material progress; it opens up a series of pictures of the development and character of Swedish social conditions.

While as a philosophical writer Nordström has been variously judged in Sweden, there can scarcely be any difference of opinion as to the fact that his later novels, considered from the artistic standpoint, do not by far measure up to the freshly original writing of his youth.

Ernst Didring (born 1868) made his début in 1897 with the interesting Norrland drama *Midnight Sun,* which portrays in picturesque and effective scenes and with dramatic tension the conflict between the Lapps and the resident Swedish population. His chief work is the novel trilogy, *Ore* (1914–19), which deals with the building of the Lapland Railway to the Norwegian border. The first two volumes contain magnificent descriptions of natural scenes and excellent pictures of the workers and their life

in the northernmost part of Sweden; the third volume forms a distinct contrast, presenting the stock jobbers and the parvenu ostentation in speculative circles in Stockholm shortly before the outbreak of the World War.

Aside from this, Didring is one of the most successful and most frequently produced of the modern Swedish dramatists. He is the possessor of a sure technique and is the master of ready dialogue. His repertoire includes both the historical dramas, *Two Kings* (1908) and *Gustavus Adolphus* (1916), and the farce, *The Flying Machine* (1915); it includes also the thrilling drama of intrigue, *High Stakes* (1909) and the modern problem drama, *The Rat Trap* (1918).

Dalecarlia has two representatives of the literature of the native soil: KARL-ERIK FORSSLUND (born 1872) and CARL LARSSON I BY (born 1877). Forsslund began as a radical nature enthusiast, who championed the healthy simplicity of country life as against the depraved culture of the metropolis, attacked the Church, and preached a new pagan joy of life. In prose and verse he writes of the great forests, tells stories about animals and flowers, and with the optimism of a new Rousseauist makes much of the peasants at the expense of the town dwellers. Of his books one may mention *Forest* (1896), *The Big Farm* (1900), *Country Tunes* (1906), *In the Mountains* (1914), *To a Mountain People* (1919). More important than his creative writing, however, is his work concerned with the investigation and conservation of the natural beauties of his native

district. This has borne fruit in his great work, *Along the Dale River from its Sources to the Sea* (1919 et seq.).

Carl Larsson i By is a landed proprietor in his native parish, By. His collections of poems, especially *Town and Peasant* (1907) and *Tithe* (1909), contain hearty and firmly fashioned songs from the life and work of the peasants, songs that are genuine in feeling and expression. But he has pictured the peasant also in serious social novels, such as *Of Earth Art Thou Come*, and in *The Second Coming of Christ* his imagination has pictured the life of Christ repeating itself under present-day conditions.

The poet of Sweden's West Coast, of Halland, is GUSTAF ULLMAN (born 1881). He has written a number of sad prose tales distinguished for the objective clarity of their descriptions of men and women and for the author's remarkable power to present a distinctive picture of the milieu and surroundings; the best of them are the short story collection *Parsons* (1907) and the novel *A Girl's Honor* (1909). Ullman is, however, undeniably at his best in his poetry. There is an elegiac autumnal mood in his nature poems, which picture the arid, heather-clad rocky coast and the sea breaking on the reefs. His lyric style is terse, laconic and intimate; the tone is quite simple, wholly without artifice, but often touching and warm; the emotional content is uncomplex and elementary and yet profound. The poems testify plainly to a sensitive and harassed emotional life with its struggles of the soul and its adjustments with conscience; sad memories of child-

hood cast their dark shadows; Nature alone—the peace of the sunset over the still waters of the Cattegat—is able to bring harmony and rest to his soul.

The eminent philosopher and estheticist, HANS LARSSON (born 1862), has presented some splendid poetic descriptions of his native province of Scania in *The Home Towns* (1916) and other volumes.

With respect to literature Scania in Southern Sweden forms, on the whole, an independent province within the kingdom. Its contributions, particularly in poetry, have been considerable, and the Scanian school of poets, inheritors after Bååth and Ola Hansson, numbers in its ranks the two greatest lyricists of modern Sweden, Vilhelm Ekelund and Anders Österling.

VILHELM EKELUND (born 1880) is one of the most brusque and solitary, but also one of the most interesting personalities in the intellectual life of modern Sweden. He made his début in 1900 with a small collection of poems entitled *Murmurs of Spring,* and during the next few years he published six small books of verse; the last was *Dithyrambs at Evenglow* (1906). Since that time he has written only a few poems.

Ekelund's first poems bear the impress of the *fin-de-siècle* moods: the feeling of solitude, tedium, dread, and world-weariness. He is a Romanticist by nature; his animated Scanian nature lyrics are never merely descriptive, but always symbolical. Nature's peace forms the great contrast to the troubled unrest of the soul. It can soothe the spirit, but it can also awaken longing for the lost land of childhood

and make solitude feel doubly oppressive. The same hopeless longing runs through his love poems, which are at their best in picturing the pain of parting. But the poet's sound and vigorous will rises in battle against this romantic melancholy. It is noted in his severely clear style, which prefers unrhymed verse and free rhythms to the artful melodies and ringing rhymes of the 90's. His artistic ideal is the antique, which leads him to a new poesy determined by intellectual and ethical considerations: hymns in worship of beauty, dithyrambs heavy with thought, in decided opposition to Romanticism's predilection for fantasy and emotion. But back of the poet's exalted calm one senses a vulnerable and divided spirit. It is only against this background that one fully understands his passionate hatred of Romanticism and his plea for purity, beauty, and strength.

His antique ideal is expressed, even more clearly than in his poems, in a series of prose works: essays, philosophical aphorisms, and prose poems. His philosophy is a stubborn subjectivism; he shuts reality out, and worships the great geniuses, but he has less need for understanding than for confirmation; he seeks in his intellectual heroes that which is akin to his own nature. His antique ideal of life is tragic heroism, and the teacher of his youth is Nietzsche. In his first prose writings, *The Ideal of Antiquity* (1909), *Books and Travels* (1910), *Bows and Lyres* (*Båge och lyra,* 1912), he attacks, in the spirit of Nietzsche, Eudaimonism, Christianity, and the prevailing bourgeois morality; he inveighs against Romanticism, modern sentimental lyricism, and half-hearted estheticism. But the influence of

Goethe and Emerson has gradually broadened and deepened his outlook on life. He has preserved his youth's passionate worship of beauty as the expression of truth and moral purity, a defense against sentimentality and emptiness. But his ethical ideal is wise moderation—calmness, power, balance and center; he is attracted toward the fundamental piety of Goethe and toward his joy of life. And he points out with profound learning the intellectual relationship of the Northern and the Classic Psyche; especially in Swedish intellectual life has the Hellenic line been significant and fruitful. These ideas are expressed in *Northern and Classic* (1914), *Veri similia* (1915–16), *Metron* (1918), *Attic Thought in Bird's-Eye View* (1919), *Substance and Shadow* (1922) and *Between Passions* (1927).

Stylistically this prose writing, at its best, equals that of its prototypes: Nietzsche, Goethe, and the great French writers of aphorisms in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And both as a poet and as a thinker Ekelund has had a decisive significance for the youngest generation in Swedish literature.

Against the background of inward excitement and struggle in the work of Vilhelm Ekelund the calm, full harmonies of ANDERS ÖSTERLING (born 1884) are doubly effective. *His* Scania—he was born in Helsingborg—is the open, smiling coast of Öresund and the quiet, fertile Scanian plain; a brighter and happier landscape than that which meets our eyes in the poetry of Ekelund.

Anders Österling's first book was a collection of

poems entitled *Preludes* (1904), which by its exuberance of form, its wealth of feeling, and its intoxicating beauty at once placed him in the first rank of the younger poets. Succeeding collections, *Sacrificial Wreaths* (1905), *Greetings* (1907), *Songs of the Year* (1907) and *Blossoming Trees* (1910), confirmed and deepened the impression made by his first book. In addition to the volumes of lyrics, Österling wrote during this period a tale in verse entitled *Death Incognito* (1908) and two plays in verse, a poetic present-day drama, *Voices of the Night* (1906) and a Midsummer fantasy, *The River Horse* (1909), based on a Scanian legend of the Neck appearing in the guise of a horse. Epically and dramatically considered, these works are rather weak; their value lies in the exquisite beauty of the diction.

Like Ekelund, Österling is a disciple of the Scanian writer, Ola Hansson, but one notes also the influence both of the English and of the newer German poetry. His first books of verse constitute a beautiful expression of youth's deep feeling of awe toward life and of its intoxication with the fresh beauty of the world. In his solemn hymns and songs of praise, in which jubilation is mingled with sobbing, the style is pitched in a high key without striking a false note, and the diction is aristocratic without seeming affected. There is fine and noble music in his quietly rolling rhythms, and his imagery, gleaming with bright colors, reminds one of the Pre-Raphaelites. His art has a tendency toward the festal and solemn moods; in a manner quite different from that of Ekelund it gives the effect of an-

tiquity with its quiet harmonious grandeur and its limpid, beautiful style. The nature of which he sings is friendly and fruitful; his seasons are spring and summer; he loves the early mornings, the white dawn with its light mists and the first rays of the sun over the sleeping city.

Back of this poetry lie the restlessness and the apprehensive doubts of youth, but especially its need of proof, of something to which it can hold fast. He understands the terror and the agony of pessimism, but he takes the courageous stand that sorrow itself makes life worth living, and his faith in life is stronger than his uncertainty concerning the eternal riddle of fate. And gradually one notes how he is drawn toward the earth and toward the life of its smallest creatures—not toward the everyday manifestations of civilization, the poverty, misery, envy, and strife of the life of today, but toward nature, the nature of Scania and of Italy. Nature tells him more than men can tell, and she builds a bridge for him to a kingdom of beautiful dreams.

The work of Österling's youth comes to a conclusion about the year 1912. *Selected Poems* appeared in 1914. The succeeding years seem to have brought him disappointments. *Torches in the Storm* (1913) is turbulent and disturbed, and it shows a bitterness unknown in his earlier works. But *The Book of Idyls* (1917) marks the beginning of a new period. In stately, mature, and opulent iambic verse he sings his hymn to the creative and sustaining forces of existence and proclaims with a happy blending of fantasy and reflection his faith in ultimate peace and reconciliation. The background of

his pictures is the Scanian landscape, more richly beautiful than ever before in his poetry. In form and in thought this is his most mature and most finished work.

In 1919 Österling became a member of the Swedish Academy, the first of his generation to attain that honor. In 1925 his *Collected Poems* appeared in four volumes. The domain of his writing is restricted, but within its boundaries his is the richest lyric talent during the period between the turn of the century and the World War.

Fredrik Vetterlund (born 1865) is related to and influenced by the Romanticism of the first half of the nineteenth century. By profession he is a literary critic, and he has produced some fine and penetrating studies of the history of Swedish Romanticism. As a poet he carries on, both in form and in content, the line of the Romanticists, but the genuine personal feeling in his poetry lifts it above the work of the epigoni. Like Ullman, Vetterlund is from Halland. He pictures the idyllic peace of a summer day in the country or twilight on a lonely winter coast. The mood is one of melancholy and solitude; he loses himself in pensive dreams and memories of the past, and at times he is seized with terror as he thinks whither evolution is leading; but in spite of all there lives in him a faith in the old ideals and in the eternally youthful romanticism of the soul.

CONCLUSION

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OUR account has now been brought up to the threshold of the youngest literature. There remains only to make a few remarks concerning the generation of the World War and the writers of the post-war period.

The favorable position of the neutral countries during the war gave a mighty impetus to the book trade and thereby also to the production of books, and good times continued during the first few years after the treaty of peace. More books are being written and published in the three Northern countries than ever before; the extent of the annual book crop in Denmark is forcibly illustrated by the fact that about 3500 books are published each year, and of these about 500 volumes come under the head of Danish creative literature. The figures for Norway and Sweden are relatively somewhat smaller, though in those countries, too, the output is greater than in previous years. But the quality of the books published is scarcely up to the quantity. Each of the three countries is still able to point to good names and good books, but the youngest generation has as yet produced no personality of European significance.

So far as Denmark is concerned, poetry takes the leading position during this period, and it is also in

poetry that foreign influence—Expressionism—has been strongest. At the point of transition from the previous period we have the poets, HANS AHLMANN, AXEL JUEL, AAGE BERNTSEN and KAI FRIIS-MÖLLER. The provincial singer, HARALD BERGSTEDT, occupies a position by himself among those who are a little older. He has written also some narrative poems and fantastic satirical novels. The leaders of the poetic revival are HANS HARTVIG SEEDORF, a gay spirit with a fine sense of form; OTTO GELSTED, who goes in for profoundly thoughtful poetry; TOM KRISTENSEN, a fastidious modernistic artist whose greatest gift, however, lies perhaps in the domain of the novel; and EMIL BÖNNELYCKE, a man of great but uncertain talent who was the pioneer of Expressionism. Other poets are FREDRIK NYGAARD and MARINUS BÖRUP. A circle of the very youngest poets, who have, as a rule, not progressed beyond the experimental stage, is identified with the magazine *Tares* (*Klinte*).

The psychological novel has an important exponent in RICHARDT GANDRUP, who continues the line from Henrik Pontoppidan. The religious unrest of the post-war period has found a literary monument in JOHANNES ANKER LARSEN's long novel, *The Philosopher's Stone*. JOHANNES BUCHHOLTZ displays humor and a sure artistic touch in his pictures of small town eccentrics and visionaries. TH. GRAVLUND bases his portrayals of the life of the people upon a broad foundation of folklore, and he has given this type of literature a conscious national trend. THOMAS OLESEN LÖKKEN, from Vendel in Jutland, is a typical local writer. JACOB PALUDAN

deals humorously and critically with the present day in his briskly moving novels of action.

The department of literature most weakly represented is the drama; the most promising names are Bertel Budtz Müller, Sven Clausen, and Johannes Heskiær.

The first place among the younger poets of Norway is occupied by Arnulf Överland, who writes with feeling of the emptiness and the pain of life, glorifies the suffering rebels, and pictures with profound irony the eternally recurring phases of existence. Other poets who write in the Riksmaal or official language of Norway are R. Hjorth Schöyen and Charles Kent. Olaf Aukrust's mighty poem *The Heavenly Beacon* (1917) is written in the Landsmaal; it is a formless and obscure but often magnificent picture of the eternal strife between good and evil, between light and darkness. A review of the Landsmaal poetry is presented in O. Dalgard's *The New Landsmaal Poetry* (1926).

In the drama Helge Krog is a disciple of Gunnar Heiberg, while Ronald Fangen, in his problem plays, is influenced by the Russians and by Strindberg.

Most important, however, is the novel. So far as the psychological novel is concerned the foremost representatives are Sigurd Christiansen, Kristian Elster the younger, Johan Ellefsen (1888–1921), Hans Lyche, and Finn Halvorsen. An important rôle is played by fiction which is more or less narrowly localized; each section of the widespread and heterogeneous kingdom has its spe-

cial authors. Mikkjel Fönhus's domain is the wilderness and its animal life; Nordland's writer is Regine Normann; Ingeborg Refling Hagen draws gloomy pictures from the eastern part of Norway; Sjur Bygd is from Vossestrand, Theodor Dahl from Jæderen, and O. Lie Singdahlsen from Hallingdal. And finally, the Norwegian-Americans, O. E. Rölvaag, and Olai Aslagsson have presented splendid pictures of pioneer life on the prairies.

In Sweden, as in Denmark, poetry has blossomed anew. It may be studied in the poet Sten Selander's anthology, *Young Lyrics* (1924), which forms a parallel to the corresponding collection for the time immediately preceding and following the turn of the century, Artur Möller's *Young Poets* (1906). A representative selection of Swedish poetry from the Middle Ages to our time has been made by the poet Karin Ek in her three-volume anthology, *Selections from Swedish Poetry* (1921). The most typical modernist among the younger writers is Pär Lagerkvist. Karl Asplund, Erik Blomberg, Gunnar M. Silfverstolpe, and Bertil Malmberg carry on the academic idealistic trend in Swedish poetry which attains its greatest heights in reflective poems. Erik Lindorm's unostentatious art is notable for its deep and genuine humanity. The social problem engaged Dan Andersson (1888–1920), whose wonderfully vivid ballads are among the most vigorous that recent years have produced. Other poets who deal with social problems are Ragnar Jändel and the Communist Ture

Nerman. Gustaf Johansson (1891–1926) was a nature poet; and the productive Harry Blomberg has with considerable success cultivated the most various styles and genres.

In the domain of the novel Gustaf Hellström, with unerring psychology, continues the novel of development and the period novel; in the books of Marika Stjernstedt we find skillful studies of the human soul. The social problem novel is represented by Martin Koch and Anna Lenah Elgström. Fabian Månsson has with penetrating understanding pictured the pietistic movements among the rural population in the nineteenth century. Among novelists who deal with their own native provinces are Adolf Johansson, Hannah Söderlund-Hammer, and Ivar Ljungquist. The religious novels of I. Oljelund have contemporary interest, and in Birger Sjöberg Swedish literature has found a new humorist of distinction.

As in Denmark and Norway, the drama is of minor importance. New impulses have been brought to it by Pär Lagerkvist; other dramatists are Carl af Ugglas and Strindberg's daughter, Karin Smirnoff.

This survey has sought to picture in rapid strokes the literary development in the three Northern countries since 1870. Considerations of space have made it impossible to deal with the history of anything more than the strictly creative literature, and the selection of names has necessarily been restricted and therefore often arbitrary.

The very title of the book, "Scandinavian Liter-

ature," designates an epoch which has now come to a close. In the days of the great men of the North, the days of Brandes and Strindberg, the North formed an intellectual entity. This is, in spite of all common cultural interests, no longer true in the same degree. With respect to literature the bond between the three related peoples has been loosened; each of them goes its own way, even though each constantly follows attentively and with understanding the development of the other two. The twentieth century will speak of a Danish, a Norwegian, and a Swedish literature. The term "Scandinavian" will then be a geographical designation, but it will not be the expression of an intellectual reality.

A SELECTED LIST OF SCANDINAVIAN BOOKS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

AANRUD, HANS: *Lisbeth Longfrock.* Tr. by L. E. Poulsson. Ginn.

ASLAGSSON, OLAI: *Under Western Skies.* Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House.

BANG, HERMAN: *Denied a Country.* Tr. by Marie Busch and A. G. Chater. Knopf.

Ida Brandt. Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.

BERGMAN, HJALMAR: *God's Orchid.* Tr. by E. Classen. Knopf.

BJÖRNSON, BJÖRNSTJERNE: *Arnljot Gelline.* Tr. by William Morton Payne. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Plays: Tr. with an introduction by Edwin Björkman. First Series: *The Gauntlet; Beyond Our Power; The New System.* Second Series: *Love and Geography; Beyond Human Might; Laboremus.* Scribner.

Poems and Songs. Tr. by Arthur Hubbell Palmer. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Sigurd Slembe; a Dramatic Trilogy. Tr. by William Morton Payne. Chicago, Dramatic Publishing Co.

Three Comedies: The Newly-Married Couple; Leonarda; A Gauntlet. Tr. by R. Farquharson Sharp. Dutton (Everyman's Library).

BOJER, JOHAN: *The Emigrants.* Tr. by A. G. Jayne. Century.

The Face of the World. Tr. by Jessie Muir. Century.

The Great Hunger. Tr. by W. J. A. Worster and Archer. Century.

Life. Tr. by Jessie Muir. Century.

The New Temple. Tr. by C. Archer. Century.

A Pilgrimage. Tr. by Jessie Muir. Century.

The Prisoner Who Sang. Century.

Treacherous Ground. Tr. by Jessie Muir. Century.

BRANDES, GEORG: *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century.* Tr. by R. B. Anderson. Crowell.

Ferdinand Lasalle. B. G. Richards Co.

Friedrich Nietzsche. Tr. by A. G. Chater. Macmillan.

Hellas; Travels in Greece. Tr. by Jacob W. Hartmann. Greenberg.

Jesus, a Myth. Tr. by Edwin Björkman. Boni.

Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature. Boni & Liveright. 6v.

On Reading; An Essay. Duffield.

Reminiscences of my Childhood and Youth. Duffield.
William Shakespeare. Tr. by William Archer, Mary Morison, and Diana White. Macmillan.
Wolfgang Goethe. Tr. by Allen W. Porterfield. Frank-Maurice. 2v.

DUUN, OLAV: *Good Conscience.* Tr. by Edwin Björkman. Harper.

EGGE, PETER: *Hansine Solstad; The History of an Honest Woman.* Tr. by Jess H. Jackson. Doubleday, Doran.

FÖNHUS, MIKKJEL: *The Trail of the Elk.* Tr. by S. H. Weedon. Century.

FRÖDING, GUSTAF: *Guitar and Concertina; a Century of Poems.* Tr. by C. D. Locock. Allen & Unwin.
Selected Poems. Tr. by Charles Wharton Stork. Macmillan.

GARBORG, ARNE: *The Lost Father.* Tr. by Mabel Johnson Leland. The Stratford Co.
Peace. Tr. by Phillips Dean Carleton. American-Scandinavian Foundation. W. W. Norton.

GEIJERSTAM, GUSTAF AF: *The Book about Little Brother; a Story of Married Life.* Tr. by Edwin Björkman. American-Scandinavian Foundation.
Woman Power; a Novel. Tr. by Esther Rapp. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

HALLSTRÖM, PER: *Selected Short Stories.* Tr. by F. J. Fielden. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

HAMSUN, KNUT: *Benoni.* Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.
Chapter the Last. Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.
Children of the Age. Tr. by J. S. Scott. Knopf.
Dreamers. Tr. by W. W. Worster. Knopf.
Growth of the Soil. Tr. by W. W. Worster. Knopf.
Hunger. Tr. by George Egerton. Knopf.
In the Grip of Life. Tr. by Graham and Tristan Rawson. Knopf.
Mysteries. Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.
Pan. Tr. by W. W. Worster. Knopf.
Rosa. Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.
Segelfoss Town. Tr. by J. S. Scott. Knopf.
Shallow Soil. Tr. by Carl Christian Hyllested. Knopf.
Victoria. Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.
Wanderers. Tr. by W. W. Worster. Knopf.

HAUKLAND, ANDREAS: *The Norns Are Spinning.* Tr. by Barent Ten Eyck. Macy-Macius.

HEIDENSTAM, VERNER VON: *The Birth of God.* Tr. by K. M. Knudsen. Four Seas Co.
The Charles Men. Tr. by Charles Wharton Stork. American-Scandinavian Foundation.
The Soothsayer. Tr. by K. M. Knudsen. Four Seas Co.
Sweden's Laureate: Selected Poems. Tr. By Charles Wharton Stork. Yale Univ. Press.
The Swedes and Their Chieftains. Tr. by C. W. Stork. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

The Tree of the Folkungs. Tr. by A. G. Chater, Knopf.

IBSEN, HENRIK: *Collected Works.* Rev. and ed. by William Archer. Scribner. 13v. Contents: v. 1: *Lady Inger of Östråt; The Feast at Solhaug; Love's Comedy.* v. 2: *The Vikings of Helgeland; The Pretenders.* v. 3: *Brand.* v. 4: *Peer Gynt.* v. 5: *Emperor and Galilean* (2 parts). v. 6: *League of Youth; Pillars of Society.* v. 7: *A Doll's House; Ghosts.* v. 8: *An Enemy of the People; The Wild Duck.* v. 9: *Rosmersholm; The Lady from the Sea.* v. 10: *Hedda Gabler; The Master Builder.* v. 11: *Little Eyolf; John Gabriel Borkman; When We Dead Awaken.* v. 12: *From Ibsen's Workshop.* v. 13: *The Life of Henrik Ibsen,* by Edmond Gosse.

Early Plays: Catiline; The Warrior's Barrow; Olaf Liljekrans. Tr. by Anders Orbeck. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

JACOBSEN, J. P.: *Marie Grubbe, a Lady of the Seventeenth Century.* Tr. by Hanna Astrup Larsen. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Mogens, and Other Stories. Tr. by Anna Grabow. Frank-Maurice.

Niels Lyhne. Tr. by Hanna Astrup Larsen. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Poems. Tr. by P. Selver. McBride.

JENSEN, JOHANNES V.: *The Long Journey.* Tr. by A. G. Chater. Knopf. Contents: v. 1: *Fire and Ice.* v. 2: *The Cimbrians.* v. 3: *Christopher Columbus.*

JÖRGENSEN, JOHANNES: *An Autobiography.* Tr. by Ingeborg Lund. Longmans, Green. 2v.

Lourdes. Tr. by Ingeborg Lund. Longmans.

Saint Francis of Assisi. Tr. by T. O'Connor Sloan. Longmans.

KINCK, HANS E. *A Young People.* Tr. by Barent Ten Eyck. Dutton.

LAGERLÖF, SELMA: *Charlotte Löwensköld.* Tr. by Velma Swanston Howard. Doubleday, Page.

Christ Legends. Tr. by Velma Swanston Howard. Holt.

Emperor of Portugallia. Tr. by Velma Swanston Howard. Doubleday, Page.

From a Swedish Homestead. Tr. by Jessie Brochner. Doubleday, Page.

Further Adventures of Nils. Tr. by Velma Swanston Howard. Doubleday, Page.

The General's Ring. Tr. by Francesca Martin. Doubleday, Page.

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LARSEN, J. ANKER: *The Philosopher's Stone.* Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.
Martha and Mary. Tr. by Arthur G. Chater. Knopf.
A Stranger in Paradise. Tr. by Ruth Castberg Jordan. Knopf.

LIE, JONAS: *The Family at Gilje.* Tr. by Samuel Coffin Eastman. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

MICHAELIS, KARIN: *Venture's End.* Tr. by Grace Isabel Colbron. Harcourt, Brace.

NANSEN, PETER: *Marie; a Book of Love.* Tr. by Julie Le Gallienne. Luce.

NEXÖ, MARTIN ANDERSEN: *Days in the Sun.* Tr. By J. W. Hartmann. Coward-McCann.
Ditte: Daughter of Man. Tr. by A. G. Chater and Richard Thrisk. Holt.
Ditte: Towards the Stars. Tr. by Asta and Rowland Kenney. Holt.
Pelle the Conqueror. Holt. 2v.

OBSTFELDER, SIGBJÖRN: *Poems from the Scandinavian.* McBride.

PALUDAN, JACOB: *Birds around the Light.* Tr. by Grace Isabel Colbron. Putman.

RING, BARBRA: *Into the Dark.* Tr. by W. Emmé. Knopf.
The Tomboy Cousin. Tr. by J. L. Ethel Aspinall. Stokes.

RUNG, OTTO: *Shadows that Pass.* Tr. by Grace Isabel Colbron. Appleton.

ROLVAAG, O. E.: *Giants in the Earth; a Saga of the Prairie.* Harper.
Peder Victorious. Harper.

SCOTT, GABRIEL: *The Golden Gospel.* Tr. by W. Worster. Macy-Masius.

SIWERTZ, SIGFRID: *Downstream.* Tr. by E. Classen. Knopf.

SÖIBERG, HARRY: *The Sea King.* Tr. by Edwin Björkman. William Morrow.

STRINDBERG, AUGUST: *Plays.* Tr. Edwin Björkman. Scribner. First Series: *The Dream Play; The Link; The Dance of Death.* Second Series: *There are Crimes and Crimes; Miss Julia; The Stronger; Creditors; Pariah.* Third Series: *Swanwhite; Simoon; Debit and Credit; Advent; The Thunderstorm; After the Fire.* Fourth Series: *The Bridal Crown; The Spook Sonata; The First Warning; Gustavus Vassa.*
By the Open Sea, Tr. by Ellie Schleussner. Viking Press.
Easter, and Stories. Tr. by Velma Swanston Howard. Appleton.
Lucky Pehr. Tr. by Velma Swanston Howard. Appleton.
Married. Boni (Modern Library.)

Master Olof. Tr. by Edwin Björkman. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

UNDSET, SIGRID: *Jenny.* Tr. by W. Emmé. Knopf.

Kristin Lavransdatter. Tr. by C. Archer and J. Scott. Knopf.

The Master of Hestviken. Tr. by A. G. Chater. Knopf.

WIED, GUSTAV. *2x2-5, a Comedy in Four Acts.* Tr. by Ernest Boyd and Holger Koppel. Frank-Maurice.

COLLECTIONS

Anthology of Swedish Lyrics. Collected and Tr. by Charles Wharton Stork. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

A Book of Danish Verse. Tr. by S. Foster Damon and Robert Hillyer. American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Denmark's Best Stories. Ed. by Hanna Astrup Larsen. American-Scandinavian Foundation. W. W. Norton.

Modern Swedish Masterpieces. Short Stories Selected and Tr. by Charles Wharton Stork. Dutton.

Norway's Best Stories. Ed. by Hanna Astrup Larsen. American-Scandinavian Foundation. W. W. Norton.

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